

The Munsters

The Last Resort

Authorized Edition



the Munsters

THE LAST RESORT

Authorized Edition

by William Johnston

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WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY • Racine, Wisconsin

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Printed in the U.S.A. by
Western Printing and Lithographing Company
Racine, Wisconsin

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Destination, Hodgepodge Lodge

THE SUN SHONE in all its brilliant splendor on the Munster home. Sunlight glinted on the colorful stained-glass windows. It sparkled on the tips of the iron spikes along the front wall. Sunlight, it seemed, was everywhere, warming the earth, celebrating the birth of a joyful day.

Lily Munster, peeking out from behind a drawn drape, winced at the sight of the sunlight, shuddered, and muttered, "Ughhhh!"

Herman Munster, coming down the stairs, stopped at the sound of his wife's voice. Herman, who in appearance resembled something not quite of this world, looked at Lily, puzzled.

Lily sighed woefully, moving away from the window. "Another day just like yesterday," she said. "When will it end, Herman? We haven't

had a dark, gloomy day since . . . since I can't remember when."

Herman looked pained. "You mean the sun is out again today?" He continued down the stairs. "I was sure we'd have rain today. Grandpa said last night that his corns hurt, and that's always a good sign."

Lily motioned toward the window. "See for yourself," she said.

Herman went to the window and started to pull back the drapes, then stopped. He shook his head. "No, I can't do it," he said. "Not until I've had some breakfast, at least. I just can't look at sunshine on an empty stomach."

"Then come along," Lily said, heading for the kitchen. "The others are already eating."

Grandpa Munster and Eddie, Lily and Herman's son, and Marilyn, their niece, were at the table. Spot, Eddie's pet, who was often mistaken for a small dragon, was curled up in a corner chewing on a bone. Grandpa and Eddie were ordinary-looking people. Grandpa had thick, bristly eyebrows and heavy cherry-red lips, and

he was dressed in a costume that had been handed down to him by Count Dracula. Eddie had ordinary pointed ears and an exceptionally ordinary low forehead. But Marilyn looked a little strange. She had shimmering blond hair, smiling blue eyes, a pert face, even features, and a slender, well-proportioned figure. In spite of her appearance, however, the other Munsters loved her, and they were careful never to mention in her company that she was "different."

Everyone at the table except Marilyn was in low spirits.

"What happened to your corns, Grandpa?" Herman said crankily, seating himself at the table. "They promised us rain today."

Grandpa grumbled, then said, "I found out that my corns weren't hurting. When I went to bed last night I discovered that I had my shoes on the wrong feet."

"Do I have to stay inside again today?" Eddie asked. "I haven't been out in weeks."

"You'll stay right here in this house, young man," Lily said. "You know what happened last

summer when you went out to play in the sun. You lost all your paleness. Remember? You turned a horrible tan color." She sniffled, recalling. "I sat by your bed for forty-eight hours straight, worrying and fretting."

"That was nip and tuck," Herman said to Eddie. "We were afraid you weren't going to recover."

"Well, if you want my opinion, I don't think the sunlight is so bad," Marilyn said. "I go out in it, and nothing horrible has ever happened to me."

Lily, Herman, Grandpa, and Eddie exchanged knowing glances.

"That may be the answer," Grandpa said. "Too much sunlight."

"The answer to what?" Marilyn asked.

"Oh, nothing," Grandpa said quickly.

Marilyn let the matter drop. "Anyway, we need sunlight," she said. "Without sunlight, the plants wouldn't grow."

"Dear, that's an old wives' tale," Lily said. "The fact is, if it weren't for sunlight, plants

would grow twice as fast as they do now. As it is, plants have to keep huddling up to keep from getting shriveled by that dreadful sun. That's what makes them so small."

"You know," Herman said thoughtfully as Lily served him his breakfast, "someone once said, 'Everybody complains about the sunlight, but nobody does anything about it.' I think we ought to be the ones to do something about it."

"For instance, what?" Lily asked.

"Maybe I could whip up a dark cloud in my laboratory," Grandpa said.

"Grandpa, you tried that once—remember?" Herman said. "But you made it so big, we couldn't get it out of the basement."

"Yes, that's the trouble with dark clouds," Grandpa said. "In order to do any good, they have to be so big that they won't squeeze through the doorway."

"Anyway, that wasn't what I had in mind," Herman said. "Another wise man once said, 'If you can't beat 'em, run away.' I think that's good advice in this case."

"Run away?" Lily said, puzzled.

"A vacation," Herman explained. "We deserve a vacation. If we go away for a few weeks, maybe this bad weather will blow over by the time we get back."

Everyone suddenly brightened.

"That's a *marvelous* idea, Herman!" Lily said. "We *do* need a rest. I need a rest from the cooking and cleaning."

"And it wouldn't hurt me to get out of my laboratory for a while," Grandpa said. "'All experiment and no play makes Grandpa a dull scientist'—that's another wise old saying."

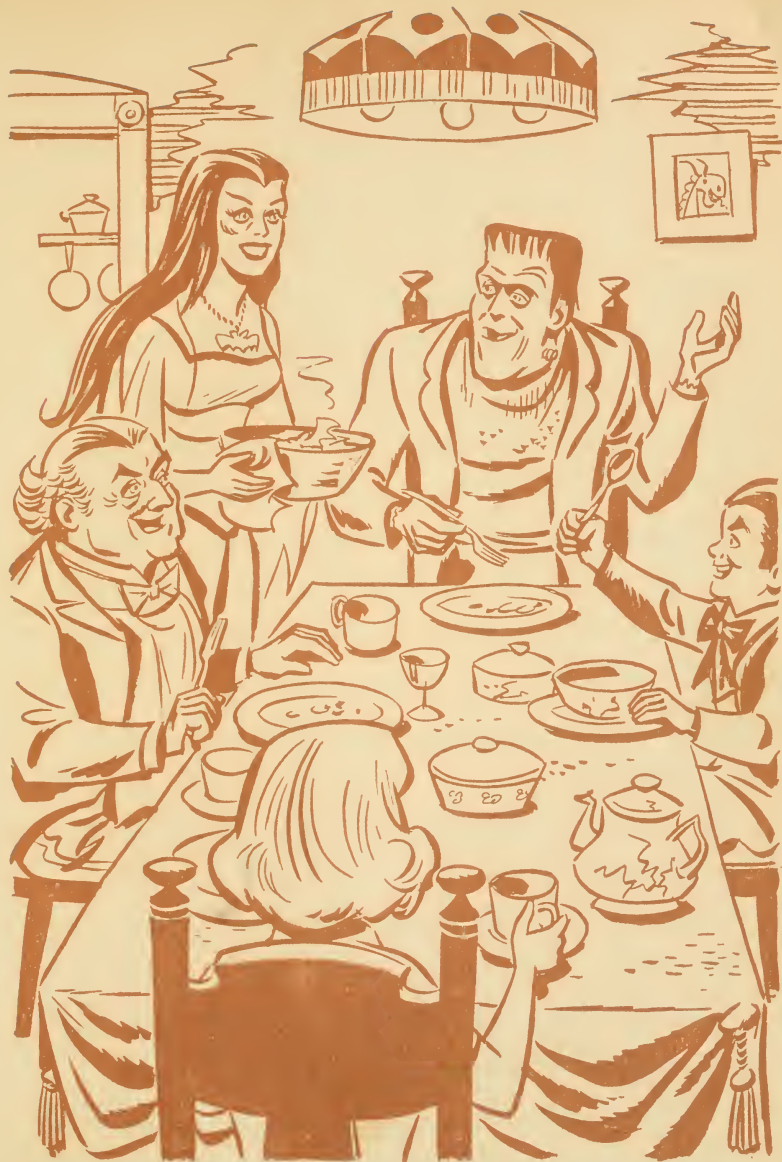
"I think two weeks at the seashore would do us all a world of good," Herman said. "We could find some stern, rockbound New England coast and hole up in a cave."

"That's for me," Grandpa said gleefully. "Some of my best friends are holed up in New England caves."

"Friends, Grandpa?" Marilyn said.

"Bats."

"Oh."



"It sounds just perfect," Lily said. "Except for one thing: I think we ought to go to the mountains. If you go high enough, there's always snow in the mountains. And wind. There's usually a lovely, chilling, biting wind."

"Let's decide this democratically," Herman said. "I want to go to the seashore, and Lily wants to go to the mountains. We'll all vote." He turned to Grandpa. "How do you vote, Grandpa?" he asked.

"A cave at the seashore for me," Grandpa replied.

"Marilyn?"

"I'm sort of partial to the seashore," she said.

"Eddie?"

"I vote for the seashore—and bats," Eddie answered.

"And I vote for the seashore, too," Herman said. "Now, then, Lily, how do you vote?"

"The mountains," Lily replied. "And if I can't go to the mountains, I won't go anywhere."

"That settles it, then," Herman said. "It's four to one for the seashore—so we'll go to

the mountains." He turned to Eddie. "Go get me the newspaper, Son. We'll look at the travel pages and pick out a mountain resort."

Eddie scurried away.

"I know it will just be heavenly," Lily said dreamily. "No cooking. No cleaning. And a chill wind."

Herman spoke to Grandpa. "You'll probably find some friends in the mountains, too," he said. "Mountains have caves."

"Yes, but it won't be the same," Grandpa replied. "Mountain bats are a little stuck-up. They look down on everybody."

"There will probably be a lot of young people at the resort," Lily said. "Maybe Marilyn will find a fellow."

"Oh, Aunt Lily!" Marilyn said, blushing.

Herman and Grandpa made no comment. Considering Marilyn's appearance, they had long ago given up hope that she would ever find a boyfriend. It was true that a lot of young men in the past had shown an interest in her. But it had never lasted. After one date—and meeting

Marilyn's family—they never returned.

Eddie came back with the newspaper.

Herman opened it to the travel section and began reading ads for mountain resorts. Finally he said, "Here's just the place. It's called Hodgepodge Lodge. Its slogan is 'Something for everybody.' And here's the clincher. The ad says it has 'unlimited entertainment facilities.'" He faced the family. "You know what that means."

"Bats' caves!" Grandpa grinned.

"Thin ice on the ice-skating rink!" Eddie cheered.

"And games," Lily beamed. "Badminton. It's been years since I last played badminton." She suddenly frowned. "I know where the rackets are—in the attic. But where did I put the bird?"

"It's in a cage down in my laboratory," Grandpa said. "You won't recognize it. I've taught it to whistle 'The Funeral March.'"

"That's such a slow beat. I hope it won't throw me off my game," Lily said. Then she smiled. "But even if I lose, I can enjoy the music."

"Are we all agreed then?" Herman said.

"Right. Hodgepodge Lodge it is!" Grandpa exclaimed.

Fortunately, overnight the weather took a turn for the better. When the Munsters awakened the next morning, they found a summer storm in progress. Rain was pouring down. The sky was as dark as night. Lightning crackled in the sky.

"Somebody up there likes us," Grandpa cackled.

"Yes, it's a perfect day for the trip," Herman agreed. "Let's just hope it's a good omen—let's hope the weather stays like this during the whole two weeks."

After breakfast, Herman, Grandpa, and Eddie piled the luggage into the car. Then the whole family, including Spot, got in, and, with Herman at the wheel, they headed for the mountains.

Soon they reached the outskirts of the city, then began the long ascent into the mountains. The rain continued to fall, becoming a down-pour. And the sky grew darker and darker.

"It's difficult to stay on the road," Herman complained. "I can't see where I'm going."

"Steer by the lightning flashes, dear," Lily suggested.

"What about between flashes?" Herman asked.

"Just don't worry about it," Lily replied. "As long as we're headed in the right direction, we couldn't go too far wrong."

"Have you seen any signs?" Grandpa asked. "Hodgepodge Lodge must have some signs up along the road pointing the way."

"I've seen four signs so far," Herman replied. "But I don't think they were put up by Hodgepodge Lodge."

"What did they say, Uncle Herman?" Marilyn asked.

"Well, in order of their appearance, they said: 'When your beard begins to scratch / Don't reach for lighter, torch, or match / Behind you do not burn your itches / Use the shave the name of which is—' "

"Which is what?" Grandpa asked.

"I don't know," Herman answered. "There

was one more sign, but I couldn't read it. The lightning suddenly went out."

"Well, it doesn't sound like directions to Hodgepodge Lodge," Grandpa said. "Unless it was in code."

"At least, we know we're getting into the mountains," Lily said. "My ears are starting to pop."

"I think that's Spot," Eddie said. "He has the hiccups."

Lily looked at him reproachfully. "I think I know an ear-pop from a hiccup, dear," she said. "We're definitely in the mountains."

"There!" Herman said suddenly as a flash of lightning lighted up the landscape. "Another sign! What did it say?"

"'Beware of falling rocks!'" Grandpa said happily. "We must be getting close to Hodgepodge Lodge. That's probably one of the entertainment facilities the ad mentioned."

"Oh! There was another sign!" Marilyn said. "But I couldn't read it."

"Back up, Herman," Lily said. "That may

have been the Hodgepodge sign. I have a feeling that we're near the lodge."

Herman obliged. When the lightning flashed again, they could read the sign, which said PRIVATE ROAD.

"This is it!" Lily said. "I knew we were near."

"It must be it," Herman agreed. "A resort would have a private road, wouldn't it? It wouldn't want a lot of picnickers driving up and leaving pop bottles and sandwich wrappers on the lawn."

So Herman headed the car up the private road.

Lily peered out of the car window. "Even if it isn't Hodgepodge—I mean, if it's some *other* lodge—I still think we ought to stay," she said. "The scenery is so beautiful."

"Yes," Grandpa said, "there's something just a little bit different about the fall of rain in the mountains. It's . . . well, I think it's . . . wetter, somehow."

"I doubt that, Grandpa," Herman said. "I think it just seems wetter. You're relaxed, you're on vacation, all your cares and woes are put

aside, and everything seems better.”

“Wetter.”

“Better and wetter,” Herman said.

“I agree,” Grandpa replied. “The wetter the better.”

“Herman, I think I saw the lodge,” Lily said. “The lightning flashed, and there it was. It looked like—” She giggled. “Oh, you’ll think I’m exaggerating.”

“Like what?” Herman asked.

“It’s just too good to be true.”

Lightning flashed again.

“Yes! I saw it!” Herman said. “Lily, you’re right!”

“Right as rain!” Grandpa said. “I saw it myself! It looked exactly like a haunted castle!”

“Oh, I hope we’re right!” Lily said. “I hope our eyes weren’t deceiving us. A haunted castle—it would be *perfect!*”

“Almost like home,” Herman said with a smile. “What more could you ask for a vacation?”

Once more lightning flashed.

"It is!" Lily squealed.

"There's no doubt about it now, Herman," Grandpa said. "The rain *was* a good omen!"

Herman drove the car up to the entrance to the castle. As he switched off the engine there was a violent clap of thunder and a shattering flash of lightning. The castle stood out like a specter against the momentarily illuminated sky. Bats fluttered from the belfries of the towers.

"Anybody you know, Grandpa?" Herman asked.

"Total strangers," Grandpa replied. "But that's the way I like it. That's what a vacation is for—to get to know a few new bats."

"I don't see any light in the castle, Herman," Lily said.

"They must be expecting us, then," Herman replied. "I wired for reservations, but I wasn't sure the telegram would get here before we did."

"Obviously it did," Grandpa said, "since they turned out all the lights for us."

The family got out of the car and, with Herman and Grandpa carrying the luggage, trudged

through the mud and mire to the castle door. Herman knocked.

There was no immediate response.

"This is the kind of welcome I like," Lily said. "They're letting us stand out here and enjoy the storm awhile before they answer the door. That is real hospitality!"

Herman knocked again.

This time the door slowly creaked open. A face appeared. It was a fairly young, slender, male face. Its hair, a seedy straw color, hung down in bangs on its forehead. On the bridge of its nose was perched a pair of thick-lensed spectacles.

"Hello there!" Herman said, smiling. "We're the Munsters."

The heavy door slammed closed.

"Isn't that nice!" Lily exclaimed. "He's giving us a few more minutes in the storm."

"Sometimes a little nice can be too much," Grandpa grumbled, shaking water off himself. "This rain is even wetter than I thought."

"I'll knock again," Herman said.

This time when the door opened a different face appeared. It was older and somewhat wrinkled. Its hair was a dingy gray color. It, too, was wearing a pair of glasses with lenses as thick as the bottoms of tumblers.

"I'm Dr. Frank Enstyne," a creaky voice said. "What do you want?"

"Our rooms!" Grandpa replied sharply. "Do you think we want to spend our entire vacation standing out here in the storm? It's lovely, but if I'm going to pay for a room, I at least want to get a look at it!"

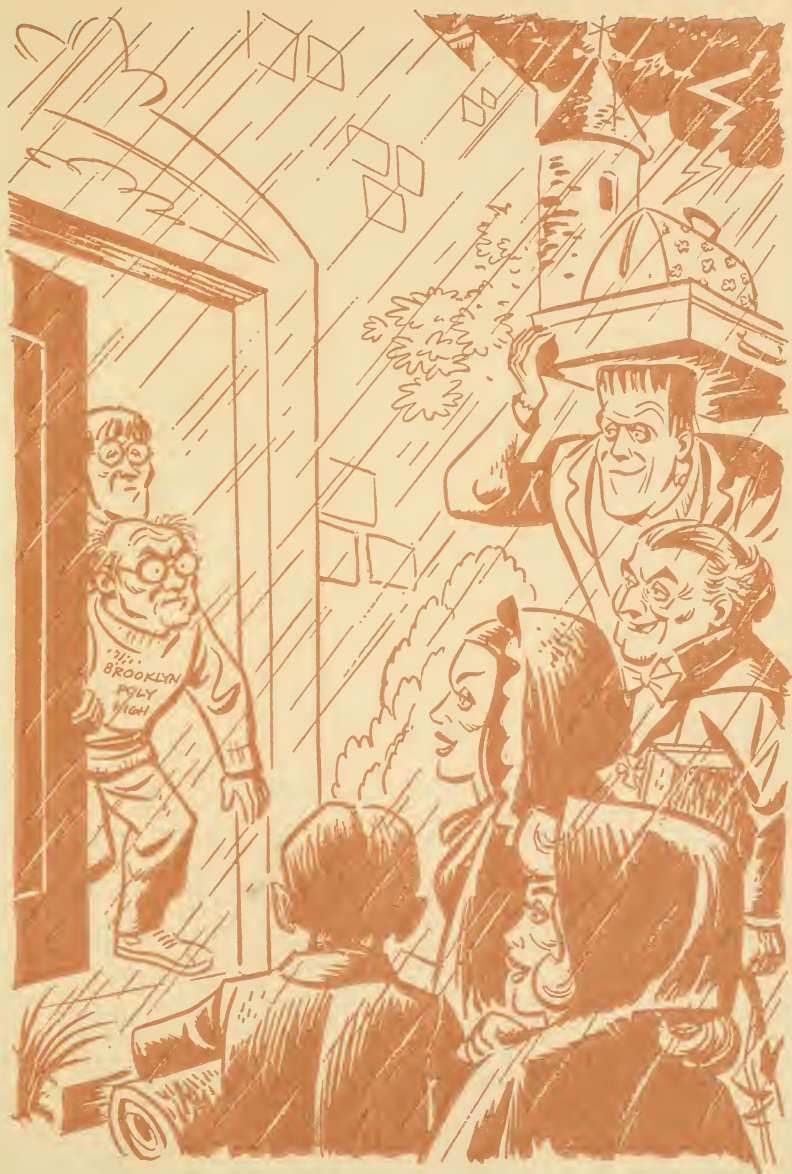
The old man blinked from behind the glasses. "Storm?" he said. "What storm is that?"

A bright flash of lightning crackled in the sky.

"That storm," Lily murmured.

The door opened a bit farther, revealing Dr. Frank Enstyne in his entirety. He was about the height of a tall gnome—or an extremely short giant. He was dressed in baggy trousers, sneakers, and a sweat shirt that had BROOKLYN POLYTECHNIC HIGH stenciled across its chest.

"Oh. *That* noise!" Dr. Enstyne said. "Is that



a storm? We thought that was old Rip Van Winkle and his boys. They're bowlers, you know."

"But couldn't you see that lovely lightning?" Lily asked.

"Of course we could see it—if we looked!" Dr. Enstyne said gruffly. "It just so happens that we have more important things to do."

Herman whispered to Lily, "I don't think he *could* see it. Did you notice the spectacles? He must have trouble with his eyesight. But don't mention it. He's probably sensitive about it."

"Are you going to show us to our rooms?" Grandpa asked irritably.

"Well . . . since there's a storm . . ." Dr. Enstyne said grudgingly.

"We *are* enjoying the storm, that's true," Lily said. "But even so, we'd like to go to our rooms. We've traveled a long distance."

Dr. Enstyne backed away from the door, allowing the Munsters to enter. As they stepped into the foyer, they again saw the first face that had appeared in the doorway. It belonged to a

man much younger than Dr. Enstyne. He looked to be about Marilyn's age.

"Thackeray!" Dr. Enstyne cried.

The young man, who was standing next to the doctor, replied, "Right here, Doctor."

"Oh . . . I thought you were going to hide."

"I changed my mind," Thackeray replied. "I was afraid you'd never find me. Because of . . . you know."

"That's a dad-blasted lie!" Dr. Enstyne exploded. "I have the eyesight of a young boy."

"If you're yelling at Thackeray, Doctor, he's over there," Herman said. "This is me you're looking at."

"Well, the same goes for you," Dr. Enstyne muttered. "Don't tell falsehoods about my eyesight!"

"I wouldn't think of it," Herman said. "I'm sure your eyes are as good as . . . as . . . well, as good as Thackeray's."

"And don't you forget it!" Dr. Enstyne grumbled. He looked around. "Thackeray! Where have you gone now?"

"Still here, Doctor."

"Oh. All right. Find some rooms for these people. There's a storm outside."

"There is?" Thackeray said. "I thought that was Rip—"

"Well, it isn't!" Dr. Enstyne broke in. "If you'd had the brains to look out the door, you'd have seen the lightning. It's out there somewhere. So the lady says, anyway. I suppose we can take her word for it. But never mind that. Take them to their rooms."

"Yes, Doctor," Thackeray replied. He faced in the general direction of the Munsters. "Would you mind leading the way?" he asked. "I sometimes have a little trouble finding the stairs."

"Don't we have to register first?" Herman said.

"What for?" Dr. Enstyne growled.

"Well . . . uh . . . so you'll know who we are."

"Don't want to know," Dr. Enstyne grumbled. "Now, then, if you'll excuse me—"

Dr. Enstyne turned, walked into the wall, bounced off it, fell over a chair, got to his feet, strode across the foyer, bounced off the opposite

wall, struck out again, reached a candle stand, tumbled over it, knocking it to the floor, picked himself up, then disappeared down the corridor.

There was a moment of silence.

Then came a crash.

"What was that?" asked Marilyn.

"The good doctor has reached the Great Hall," Thackeray commented.

"He's nimble for a fellow his age, isn't he?" Herman said.

"He has to be," Thackeray replied. "He doesn't see too well." He smiled and changed the subject. "I know that Dr. Enstyne said he didn't want to know you, but he doesn't always speak for me. I'd like to be introduced. Didn't I hear a young, feminine voice?"

"That's Spot," Eddie said. "He has the hiccups."

"I think Thackeray is referring to Marilyn, dear," Lily said.

Thackeray smiled again and nodded to Spot. "Marilyn! What a lovely name!" he said.

"See—it was the hiccups," Eddie said.

"This is Marilyn here," Herman said, indicating his niece. "And over here, this is Lily, my wife. And Grandpa. And Eddie, here, is my son."

Thackeray extended a hand.

Spot put a paw into it.

"It's been years since I talked to anyone my own age," Thackeray said. "I hope we'll have some time together before you have to leave."

"Are you Spot's age?" Lily asked, looking surprised. "My, my, you look so young—not a day over twenty-five."

"Shh!" Herman shushed her. "I think he thinks Spot is Marilyn. His eyes. . . . But let's not mention it. After all, in a sense we're guests here."

"Who's going to lead the way?" Thackeray asked. "The rooms are all upstairs. And the stairway is right over there." He pointed to a wall.

"I'll lead," Herman said. "Ready, everybody?"

Herman picked up the luggage he had carried in from the car and strode off toward the stairway. Grandpa, toting the rest of the luggage,

followed him. After Grandpa came Lily and Marilyn and Eddie.

“Right behind you!” Thackeray called, striking off at an angle. “You have a lovely family,” he said to Spot, who was padding along beside him. “I almost hope this storm lasts forever. It would be nice to have company.” He giggled. “Charming feminine company, such as yours,” he added.

“Hic,” Spot hiccuped.

2

Blindman's Buff

AS THACKERAY and Spot disappeared in another direction, the Munsters reached the broad winding staircase and started up. Cobwebs were everywhere, suspended from the oak-beam ceiling, filling the spaces between the stair posts, floating airily from chandeliers. An odor of musk and dank pervaded the castle, which was lighted eerily by a few thick, drip-coated candles. The wind of the storm whistled and moaned in the towers and corridors.

"Just look, Herman! Isn't it perfect? It's . . . it's almost like home!" Lily said.

"It is comfy," Herman admitted.

"It could use a good cleaning," Lily said. "But other than that, I could close my eyes and almost believe that I was right at home, walking up my own stairway. Herman, I want to stay. Hodge-

podge Lodge or not, I want to stay right here!"

Herman halted the procession at the first door they reached. He pushed the door open and looked into the room. It was pitch-dark.

"Cozy," Lily said, peering in.

"How can you tell?" Herman asked.

"Why, it looks just like our room at home when all the lights are out," Lily replied.

Herman looked again. "As a matter of fact, it does," he admitted. He turned to the others. "Lily and I will take this room," he said. "Grandpa . . . Marilyn . . . Eddie . . . can you find your way from here?"

"We'll be all right," Grandpa replied. "Lily is correct about one thing. This castle *is* a lot like home. I could find my way blindfolded."

"Grandpa, you have the eyes of a cat," Herman said.

"Indeed I do," Grandpa replied. "I got them from an uncle on my mother's side of the family. Uncle Tom."

Then Grandpa moved on down the corridor, followed by Marilyn and Eddie.

Back on the main floor, Spot, tired of Thackeray's chatter, curled up in a corner and fell fast asleep. Thackeray, unaware that he had lost his audience, stumbled blithely on.

"Oops!" he said, falling over a chair. Picking himself up, he added, "I don't remember that chair being on the way to the stairs. Your uncle must be lost. I guess I should have led the way myself."

Proceeding, Thackeray ran into a long table, did a somersault across it, and landed faceup on the floor on the other side. "That table is definitely not on the way to the stairs," he said. Then he called out. "Mr. Munster! Stop! This isn't the way to the stairs! You're lost!"

There was no reply.

"They *are* lost!" Thackeray said. He sighed. "Well, now we'll just have to find them before we show them upstairs."

Getting to his feet again, he moved on through the room.

"Actually, I don't mind the delay," Thackeray said, speaking to the absent Spot, whom he as-

sumed to be Marilyn. "It gives us a chance to get to know each other better. Do you have any hobbies? Dr. Enstyne and I used to play chess. But one night we put the chessboard away, and we haven't been able to find it since."

Thackeray turned, entered an adjoining room, met with a sofa, tumbled onto it, righted himself, strolled onward across the sofa, came to the end, crashed to the floor, picked himself up, and walked into a wall.

"Maybe we'd better take the shortcut," he said. "I know it better."

Thackeray did an about-face, mounted the sofa again, made his way across the cushions, tumbled to the floor at the other end, rose, then departed through the door from which he had entered the room. He proceeded along the corridor until he came to the place where Spot had settled down for a nap, at which point he stumbled into Spot.

Spot howled.

"Dr. Enstyne, is that you?" Thackeray said, peering at Spot.

"Hic!"

"Oh, it's *you*! Then who was that howling?"

Spot hiccuped again.

"My, you're shy," Thackeray said. "But that's all for the better. I'm a bit shy myself. That is, normally I am. But with you, somehow, I'm a different person. You seem to bring out the best in me." He glanced around. "Let's see . . . let me get my bearings, and then we'll— Oh, yes, I think the stairway is in that direction. Come along. We'll probably find your family upstairs."

Thackeray led the way, and Spot ambled after him. A moment later, Thackeray came to a doorway. Unfortunately it was open. From the landing, Spot docilely watched his friend pass through the opening, then bump-bump-bump-bump-bump-bump-bump-bump-bump-bump down the twelve steps to the basement.

In a heap at the bottom, Thackeray peered back in the direction from which he had come. "That's odd. I was sure those steps went up, not down," he said.

Spot followed him leisurely down the steps.

Close by, a door opened. Dr. Frank Enstyne appeared. "Who's that?" he growled.

Thackeray faced toward the sound. "Who's that?" he replied.

"Who's that who said 'Who's that?' when I said 'Who's that?'" Dr. Enstyne responded.

"Oh—Doctor! It's me!"

Dr. Enstyne peered closely at Spot, who had now reached the basement. "Thackeray? What's happened to you? You're shorter."

"Over here, Doctor."

"Then who's the shorty?" Dr. Enstyne said, turning to Thackeray.

"One of our guests, Doctor. Remember? This is Marilyn."

"That's a funny name for a shorty," Dr. Enstyne said.

"She's a girl," Thackeray explained, blushing.

Dr. Enstyne looked back at Spot. "Well, I'll take your word for it," he said. "But in my day, girls were taller. Or is she on her knees?"

"She may be," Thackeray replied. "She's shy."

"What I want to know is, what's she doing down here?" Dr. Enstyne said. "No one is allowed down here in our laboratory."

"I thought I was taking her upstairs," Thackeray explained.

"You mean you don't know down from up? I hope I never have to put you in charge of flying a kite." He shrugged. "Well, the harm's done. Now that she's here, I suppose she'll pry around until she finds out what we're doing in the laboratory. That's the way girls are—nosy, nosy, nosy. No sense in trying to hide it. She'll start asking seemingly innocent questions. Then, before you know it, we'll have told her the whole story." He glared at Spot. "Shame on you, you girl, you!"

"Hic!"

Dr. Enstyne groaned. "See! It's started already—questions!"

"It won't do any harm to let her see what we're doing," Thackeray said. "After all, no one can stop us now."

"True," Dr. Enstyne agreed. "And she might have some suggestions. The woman's point of

view is always helpful." He gestured toward the doorway. "All right, bring her in."

Dr. Enstyne disappeared into the room from which he had emerged.

Thackeray swept an arm in that direction. "After you, my dear," he said, smiling.

Spot strolled blithely into the room, and Thackeray followed.

"As you can plainly see, this is our laboratory," Dr. Enstyne said, indicating the tables that were cluttered with test tubes and scientific apparatus. "Now, I suppose, you'll nose around until you find out what we're working on. Well, I'll save you the trouble."

"Prepare yourself for a surprise," Thackeray said.

Dr. Enstyne went to a long table on which an almost human-like form was stretched out at rest. It looked almost exactly like Herman Munster.

"Our masterpiece!" Dr. Enstyne announced ecstatically.

"We made it ourselves, piece by piece, part by

part," Thackeray said proudly. "Handsome creature, isn't it?"

"And practical," Dr. Enstyne added. "With this monster, we intend to conquer the world! You can't get much more practical than that."

"As soon as we work out the one little bug," Thackeray said.

Dr. Enstyne groaned. "Yes . . . the bug."

"The voice mechanism doesn't function properly," Thackeray explained. "It shorts out. We have some work to do yet on the wiring."

"Sometimes it talks, sometimes it doesn't," Dr. Enstyne grumbled. "And it's hard to know when it does and when it doesn't. When it does, we know, of course. It says things. But when it doesn't—who can tell? We never know whether it's shorted out or just doesn't have anything to say. It's a problem."

"You see, we plan to mass-produce these monsters," Thackeray said. "That is, make thousands of them."

"Then send them out to take over the world," Dr. Enstyne said. "But first we have to get the



bug out. It's absolutely essential."

"Yes," Thackeray agreed. "It's our feeling that a monster that couldn't talk wouldn't be very effective."

"Right," Dr. Enstyne nodded. "Who'd pay any attention? One of our monsters would clank into, say, New York City, or maybe Washington, D.C., and start taking over headquarters. But if he shorted out—couldn't talk—how would he explain what he was there for? Today, taking over the world is a complicated business. You have to go on radio and television. You have to be interviewed by newspapers and magazines. You have to communicate. Otherwise, people won't pay any attention. They'll just go about their business."

"You can imagine how pointless it would be for our monster to go on television if he couldn't talk," Thackeray said. "A monster—just sitting. It would probably be a popular program, but would it sell? That's the question."

"Popularity is not what we're after," Dr. Enstyne said. "Dictators, that's what we want to be."

Kings of the world! But you can't do that with a monster with a bug in it."

"Hic," Spot hiccuped.

"I'm glad you understand," Thackeray said. "A lot of people would say that it's wrong to want to take over the world."

"A lot of people would say: 'What do you want with it? It's not the same world it was a hundred years ago,' " Dr. Enstyne said. "But my answer to that is, where else is there? If you're going to take over a place, how much choice have you got?"

"Hic."

"I think you're catching cold," Thackeray said to Spot. "This cellar *is* a bit damp. Perhaps I'd better show you to your room."

"Let her find her own room!" Dr. Enstyne said. "What are you, a scientist or a tour director? We have work to do!"

Thackeray spoke apologetically to Spot. "Could you find your way?" he said. "As a matter of fact, it would probably be quicker if you went alone."

"Hic."

"Good." Thackeray smiled. "And I'll see you tomorrow. Have a good night's rest."

Spot turned and lumbered out of the room.

"Is she gone?" Dr. Enstyne asked.

Thackeray peered about the room. "Are you gone?" he inquired.

There was no response.

"She's gone," he replied.

"I didn't want to say it in front of her, but I don't trust that girl," Dr. Enstyne said. "She's too pretty. Never trust a pretty face!"

"But what could she do?" Thackeray protested.

"She could let our secret out! She could snitch to the world that we're going to conquer it!"

"Well, I don't think that would matter much," Thackeray said. "We couldn't be stopped."

"I know that," Dr. Enstyne said. "But it would spoil the surprise!"

"I'm sure she won't tell," Thackeray said. "She probably doesn't even believe us. Nobody does. I've mentioned it to several people in the village

when I've gone down for supplies, and they always laugh."

Dr. Enstyne was furious. "You told!"

"I didn't tell anybody *how*," Thackeray replied. "When they asked what we were doing up here, I simply answered that we were plotting to conquer the world. You wouldn't want me to lie about a thing like that, would you? But I didn't mention the monster."

Dr. Enstyne was somewhat mollified. "And they laughed?" he said curiously.

"But only because they don't know about the monster," Thackeray explained.

Dr. Enstyne nodded, understanding. "Yes, that makes the difference. I might laugh myself if I didn't know about the monster." He suddenly looked sad. "But I also know about the bug," he said. "And I'm not laughing."

"We'll lick it, Doctor," Thackeray said confidently. "It's merely a matter of hours . . . or days . . . or years . . . now."

"Yes, but what's the point of taking over the world if you're too old to enjoy it?" Dr.

Enstyne asked, looking rather gloomy.

"I don't think a person ever gets too old to enjoy a thing like that," Thackeray replied.

"Ahhh," Dr. Enstyne sighed, "you're so wrong. You know what I have in mind? The first thing, after we've taken over the world? I'm going to chase all those little kids who used to call me 'Goggle-eyes.' But if I'm too old, where's the kick?"

"How could you possibly be too old for that, Doctor?"

"Thackeray, I'll tell you. My eyesight isn't what it used to be. You probably haven't noticed it, but sometimes I squint a little. If I get too old and my eyesight goes, what joy will there be in chasing those kids? I won't be able to see them suffer."

"Then we'd better get busy right now!" Thackeray said. "If we work through the night, maybe we can get the bug out by morning."

"Right! To work!" Dr. Enstyne said. He peered around the laboratory. "Where is the monster?"

"It's on a table," Thackeray replied. "I'm sure of that. You feel around on all the tables on that side of the room, and I'll feel around on all the tables on this side of the room. We'll find it in no time."

"Right! Let's go!"

They both reached out at the same time, feeling for a table.

"I've found it!" Dr. Enstyne cried.

"So have I!" Thackeray crowed.

"It's moving!" Dr. Enstyne said, puzzled.

"It's trying to get away!" Thackeray shouted.

"No it isn't; it's trying to keep *me* from getting away!" Dr. Enstyne screamed. "It's turned on us!"

Suddenly there was silence. It continued for a moment.

Then Thackeray asked, "Dr. Enstyne? Are you there?"

"I'm here. The monster released me."

"That was me," Thackeray said.

"Oh."

"It wasn't the monster we found, Doctor."

"I think I understand," Dr. Enstyne replied.

"I found you, and you found me. Right?"

"Right."

"Let's try again," Dr. Enstyne said moodily.

3

In Search of a Closet

GRANDPA WAS the first one up the next morning. He arose at dawn, dressed, and went downstairs, intending to search some caves in the mountains. It was his hope that he might know some of the bats. And he wanted to find the bats' nests before the bats settled down for a peaceful day's rest.

But, reaching the main floor of the castle, Grandpa was delayed by curiosity. He went exploring on the main floor and soon came to the door that led to the cellar.

"I suppose it's too much to hope for," he said to himself, peering down into the darkness. "But, then, on the other hand, the advertisement did say 'unlimited entertainment facilities.' "

Hopeful, but expecting disappointment, Grandpa descended the steps to the cellar. A

moment later he found the door to Dr. Enstyne's laboratory and entered.

"Unbelievable!" he exclaimed. "Hodgepodge Lodge has thought of everything! This is just like home!"

Grandpa did not dally in the laboratory, however, even though he was tempted. He wanted to find the bats' nests before the bats turned in for the day. So he left the laboratory and the castle and struck out into the mountains in search of caves.

A few hours later, Grandpa returned. His cheeks were flushed with the cold, and he was stomping his feet to get them warm.

The moment he stepped into the castle he sniffed a familiar odor. Following his nose, he trailed it to the kitchen, where he found Lily standing at the stove.

"Good morning, Grandpa. You're just in time for breakfast," Lily greeted him. She stared at his flushed cheeks. "You must have an outside room," she said.

"All of the rooms are outside rooms," Grand-

pa replied, seating himself at the table. "It's almost as if they built this lodge with us in mind. But that's not what put the color in my cheeks. I've been up for hours. I went out to look for bats."

"Did you find anyone you know?"

"Lily, you wouldn't believe it! I have a cousin here from Altoona, Pennsylvania!"

"Isn't that nice!" Lily said. "I'll bet you two had a lot to talk about."

"We did," Grandpa agreed. "But, as a matter of fact, we didn't get much talking done. He was sleepy. He kept mixing me up with our cousin Alfred from Hagger's Landing, Vermont. Cousin Alfred is from the other side of the family."

Lily put his breakfast before him.

"Shouldn't we wake Herman and the others?" Grandpa asked. "They'll be mad at themselves if they miss this."

"Oh, they've been up for hours," Lily replied. "They had breakfast. Herman and Eddie and Spot are out looking for caves."

"Where's Marilyn?"

"I sent her to look for a broom. This castle needs a good sweeping. Grandpa, do you realize that this lodge has no staff? No cook, no cleaning woman! As soon as I finish here in the kitchen, I'm going to do some tidying up." She smiled happily. "It's just like a home," she said.

"I know, I know," Grandpa said, grinning. "You'll never guess what I found in the cellar."

"No!"

"Yep! A laboratory! I could hardly believe it. But there it was, a fully outfitted laboratory. Just like at home!"

"Isn't it wonderful!" Lily said enthusiastically. "I knew it would do us good to get away. But I had no idea it would be this marvelous. Just like at home!"

"The only thing is, I'm afraid Marilyn is going to be a little disappointed," Grandpa said. "As far as I can tell, we're the only guests here at the lodge. I was hoping there would be a few young fellows around."

"Well, there's that Mr. Thackeray. He seems to be interested in her."

"How does he know? He spent all his time with Spot."

"But he thought Spot was Marilyn, Grandpa. And, after all, it's the thought that counts."

"I guess you're right, Lily," Grandpa said. "And, if it turns out that Thackeray is sweet on Marilyn—or Spot, that is—we can just take Spot away and put Marilyn in Spot's place. Thackeray will never know the difference."

"Those things have a way of working out," Lily said. "I'm not going to worry about it."

Marilyn, meanwhile, was searching the castle for a broom, looking into one closet after another. Now, opening a door which she assumed led to a closet, she found herself face-to-face with Thackeray.

"Oh! I thought this was a closet."

Thackeray blinked at her. "Maybe it is," he said. "I thought I was coming up out of the cellar. But I could be coming up out of a closet. Sometimes it's hard to know."

Marilyn looked past him, down the steps. "No,

that's a cellar down there," she said.

Thackeray was relieved. "It wouldn't be the first time I'd made that mistake," he said. "Many's the morning I've spent in a closet thinking I was in the cellar."

"That must be dreadful."

"No, it isn't bad, since I don't really know I'm in a closet. But it *is* a waste of time, because all the work I do while I'm in the closet is worthless. I once spent a whole morning in a closet wiring a pair of shoes to a mop handle. It was a job well-done. But it had no practical purpose." He stepped into the corridor, closing the cellar door behind him. In the light, squinting more closely at Marilyn, he said, "You look taller this morning."

"It's probably the mountain air," she replied. "I think it's supposed to be healthful."

"It hasn't done anything for me," Thackeray said. "I'm still the same height as when I came here." He leaned a little closer. "You haven't talked to anyone about what we told you last night, have you?" he said, lowering his voice.

Marilyn stared at him, perplexed. "What you told me?"

"About you-know-what."

Marilyn shook her head. "No, what?"

Thackeray beamed. "Good! I appreciate that. Just pretend that nothing was ever said. Not that *I* mind, but Dr. Enstyne wants to keep it a secret. He wants it to be a surprise."

"Well, I'm sure it will be," Marilyn said. "Especially to me."

"Good, good, good," Thackeray said, grinning. "That's a wonderful attitude. A lot of girls couldn't wait to blab it all over. I admire your self-control."

"It really isn't that difficult," Marilyn said, "since—"

"Closet?" Thackeray broke in, his mind making a full circle back to Marilyn's opening comment. "Did you say you were looking for a closet?"

"Oh . . . yes. Aunt Lily wants to do some cleaning. She needs a broom, so she sent me to look for one."

"Well, you're wasting your time," Thackeray said. "I've been here for years and I have never seen a broom."

"You've never *seen* a broom?" She stared at him a moment, then added, "But, of course, that doesn't mean that there *isn't* one."

"True," Thackeray said, nodding. "And if you want a broom, I think it's my duty, as your co-host, to help you find one. Where shall we look?"

"Closets," Marilyn said. "That's where brooms are usually kept."

"Right!" Thackeray said smartly. "Forwaaard march! On to the closet!" He took a step, then halted. "Ah . . . you'd better lead the way," he said.

Marilyn moved on down the corridor, and Thackeray followed her, more or less.

"Don't you and Dr. Enstyne *ever* clean?" Marilyn asked. "There are cobwebs and dust everywhere!"

"We hadn't noticed," Thackeray replied. "But even if we had, I doubt that we would have

bothered. We're dedicated to our work."

"But that should be part of your work," Marilyn said. "No wonder you don't have more guests. People like things to be neat and clean."

"We don't want guests," Thackeray said. "Why would we want guests? They'd just be in the way."

"Well, if I were you, I would want guests. I don't see how you can ever expect to be successful without guests."

"Guests have absolutely nothing to do with it," Thackeray said. "It's the bugs that are keeping us from success."

"Oh. Well, then, that explains why you don't have more guests." She stopped. "Isn't there something you can do about it?"

"We're working on it. I told you that. Remember?"

"You told me? When?"

"Last—" He suddenly grinned. "I forgot. You're pretending *not* to remember, aren't you? All right. In that case, I withdraw my statement. I didn't mention it to you before." He looked

around. "Have we found a closet yet?"

"No."

"Well, let me know when we do."

Marilyn proceeded.

But Thackeray, unaware that she had moved on, remained standing in the corridor.

"Do you mind if I say something personal?" Thackeray asked, addressing the space that Marilyn had recently occupied.

There was no answer.

"You *are* shy," Thackeray said. "I told Dr. Enstyne that you were shy, but I didn't realize how shy. Well, no matter. Normally I'm pretty shy myself. Even as a child I was shy. I remember, when I was still a little nipper, my father used to look at me worriedly and say, 'That boy is shy *something!*' It was his way of saying, I think, that I was timid."

Only silence.

"But in your company, somehow, I'm not at all shy," Thackeray went on. "In fact, I feel like saying exactly what I think. So I will. I think you are a very pretty girl. There!"

Still there was only silence.

"Did you hear me?"

At that moment Dr. Enstyne appeared from the cellar and came stomping along the corridor.

"Aren't you going to say something?" Thackeray asked. "I just told you you're pretty."

Dr. Enstyne halted. "What can I say?" he said. "It's no news to me. I've always been pretty."

Thackeray stiffened, startled. "This mountain air is amazing!" he said. "Your voice has changed. Do you know who you sound like?"

"Like gorgeous Dr. Frank Enstyne?" Dr. Enstyne asked.

"Exactly! Although I don't think I'd call him gorgeous."

"You would if you want to keep your job!" Dr. Enstyne growled. "Because that's who I am!"

"Gorgeous?"

"No, Dr. Enstyne!"

"Oh," Thackeray said weakly. "I'm sorry, Doctor. I thought you were Marilyn."

"What's a Marilyn?" Dr. Enstyne asked.

"Our guest. Remember our guests? We took

them in out of the storm last night. One of them is Marilyn."

"Them!" Dr. Enstyne raged. "You mean they're still here?"

"I think they plan to stay for a while," Thackeray said. "Marilyn said that her aunt intends to do a little cleaning up."

Dr. Enstyne looked baffled. "Clean? Clean? Clean what?"

"The castle."

Dr. Enstyne glanced around. "Is it dirty?"

"Well, it may be, Doctor. We haven't ever cleaned, have we?"

"Not that I can recall," Dr. Enstyne replied. Then his rage returned. "But we would have if it had needed cleaning. Those people have got to go. We don't know anything about them. They might be anybody!"

"But you talked to Marilyn last night," Thackeray protested. "She seemed like a nice girl, didn't she?"

"Appearances are deceiving," Dr. Enstyne replied. "Especially with my eyes."

"I'm sure she's a nice girl," Thackeray said. "I think she was going to help her aunt clean the castle. That's nice, isn't it?"

"How do you know that's what she was going to do?"

"She was looking for a broom."

"Ha!" Dr. Enstyne exploded. "What did I say? We don't know anything about those people. You know why she was looking for a broom? She's a witch!"

"Doctor, please! There is no such thing as a witch!"

"Oho! *I* know that. And *you* know that. But does *she* know that? If she says she's a witch, then she's a witch! Let her fly around somebody else's castle on a broomstick. Not around my castle, she doesn't! Out she goes! Her and all the rest of the witches!"

"But, Doctor—"

Doctor Enstyne, however, had no intention of listening to argument. He stormed down the corridor, crying, "Hey, you witches! Come out! Come out, come out, wherever you are! I see

you! Come out and get tossed out! Out! Understand? Out!"

Thackeray slumped. He sighed sadly. Then he turned and made his way in the general direction of the doorway to the cellar.

"Ho, there!" Dr. Enstyne cried, plunging on. "Come out, you witches!"

He crashed into a table, did a flying somersault, and landed on his back.

"Aha!" he bellowed. "Playing your witchy tricks on me, are you?"

He scrambled to his feet and pushed onward. A moment later he went pounding into the kitchen. Lily was still standing at the stove.

"Out! Out!" Dr. Enstyne roared. "I demand it. Who is the master here? Me, that's who! Out! A man's castle is his castle!"

"Oh, hello there, Doctor," Lily trilled. "You're just in time!"

Dr. Enstyne halted. He squinted around the room. "Where are you hiding?"

"Right over here, Doctor. By the stove. It's me, Lily Munster."



Dr. Enstyne sniffed the air. "Oho! Witches' brew!"

"Nonsense," Lily chided. "I'm making gnishes."

"Gnishes?"

"It's my own recipe," Lily explained. "They're a little like knishes—but not exactly."

"Knishes?"

"Yes. But not exactly. I changed the recipe, so I thought, in all fairness, I ought to change the spelling, too." She picked up a piece of pastry from a tin. "Here, try one."

"I don't—" Dr. Enstyne began. But he was unable to complete the statement. Lily, in her motherly fashion, had popped a gnish into his mouth. "Groggle-purfa-bromph!" Dr. Enstyne raged.

"I *knew* you'd like them!" Lily bubbled.

Dr. Enstyne swallowed hard, then tried again. "Madam—"

But that was as far as he got. Lily stoppered the words with another gnish.

"Proppa-burgle-prumph!"

"No, as a matter of fact, it isn't the usual filling," Lily replied. "Normally I fill them with chopped liver. But I couldn't find any liver in your refrigerator to chop. So I used leftovers. A little of this, a little of that. Incidentally, what was in that jar that was labeled with a question mark?" She turned to the table and picked up an empty jar. "This one," she said. "There was something red in it."

Dr. Enstyre clamped his jaws shut tight. A kind of vapor—smoke or steam—spouted from the corners of his mouth.

"Oh!" Lily brightened. "I'll bet it was red peppers!"

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Dr. Enstyre shrieked.

He whipped around and raced from the kitchen. Reaching the corridor, he sped toward the cellar doorway. But it was not a happy journey. He crashed into a chair, tumbled over it, landed on his feet, and charged onward. A few steps later he collided with the end of a long table. But momentum carried him forward. He slid the length of the table, dived off the far end,

performed a rolling somersault, regained his feet, tripped over a rug, performed another somersault—this time a triple—and landed finally at the entrance to the cellar.

Leaping up, Dr. Enstyne raced down the steps to his laboratory. Entering, he stumbled into a table. Test tubes flew.

Thackeray, who was seated on a stool at another table, cried out in alarm. "Doctor? Is that you?"

"Who were you expecting?" Dr. Enstyne bel-
lowed.

"You're destroying the laboratory!"

Dr. Enstyne forced a measure of calmness upon himself. "They've got to go!" he said grimly. "How can I work with a gnish cooker in the castle!"

Thackeray peered puzzledly in Dr. Enstyne's general direction. "A knish cooker, Doctor?"

"Not a knish cooker, a gnish cooker! She changed the spelling!"

"Oh. Doctor . . . what's a gnish cooker?"

"That woman! Open your mouth, and she

pops you in the teeth with a red-hot gnish! Where's the monster?"

Thackeray shuddered. "No, Doctor! No! Not that!"

"Where's my monster?" Dr. Enstyne screamed.

"We put him away in his container, Doctor," Thackeray replied. "But, no, no, not that! Don't turn the monster loose!"

"I must!" Dr. Enstyne fumed, feeling his way toward the long, metal, casket-like box that contained the monster. "It's me or them! One more gnish and I'm a dead fish!"

Thackeray pleaded. "Doctor, please! Think what you're doing! Those poor innocent people!"

"Nobody that makes a gnish like that is innocent!" Dr. Enstyne raged.

Arriving at the container, which was standing upright against the wall, he opened it, reached in, and activated the monster. There was a whirl of electric motors. The monster's eyes rolled. It raised an arm—to the tune of a high-pitched squeak.

"Needs a little oil on the elbow," Dr. Enstyne

said, reaching for the oilcan.

"Please!" Thackeray begged. "Don't do it!"

"I must," Dr. Enstyne replied. "I'm a scientist. What's the use of creating a monster if you don't turn it loose on somebody? You know what they'd say about Louis Pasteur if he'd kept all his pasteurized milk to himself?"

"No, what, Doctor?"

"They wouldn't say anything," Dr. Enstyne replied. "Nobody would have heard of him."

"But, Doctor, can't you test your monster on someone else? A stranger, perhaps? These people—I feel like I know them. In fact, one of them, I—" He lowered his eyes, blushing. "I think I'm in love, Doctor."

"Take an aspirin," Dr. Enstyne suggested.

"I don't think that would help."

"Take two aspirins. Anything two aspirins won't cure is all in the head." He punched a button on the monster, and it stepped from the container. "Now," he said, poising his finger over another button, "let's see how the voice mechanism is working today." He punched the button.

But the monster said not a word.

"Why don't you give it an aspirin?" Thackeray said bitterly.

"Don't be a smart scientist's assistant," Dr. Enstyne grumbled. "Nobody likes a smart scientist's assistant!"

Once more Thackeray pleaded. "Doctor, I beg you. Have a heart!"

"I haven't got a heart anymore," Dr. Enstyne muttered, moving to the rear of the monster. "It was burned out by a red-hot gnish!" He squinted at the controls in the monster's back. "Let's see, what'll I set it at? 'Slightly irritated,' or 'extremely cranky,' or 'hot under the collar,' or 'raging monster'?"

"Doctor! No, no, no, please!"

"'Raging monster,' " Dr. Enstyne decided. "Tit for tat. A red-hot gnish deserves a raging monster!"

"Doctor, I—"

The monster suddenly came to life. Its mouth opened. Since its voice mechanism was not operating, it remained silent, but it was obvious

that it had intended an earthshaking roar.

"Listen to that!" Dr. Enstyne smiled. "That's music to the ears. If only we could hear it!"

"Doctor, I refuse to be a party to this!" Thackeray said angrily.

"What party? This is going to be a massacre!"

"I'm leaving!" Thackeray snapped. He turned; strode toward the doorway; knocked over a table; headed toward the monster's container, thinking it was the doorway; bumped into the monster; rebounded; and, backing away, backed out the doorway. In the corridor, he did an about-face and marched up the stairs.

"I think that's a record," Dr. Enstyne said to the monster. "That's the quickest he's got out of here in three years."

The monster pantomimed a roar again.

"You said it," Dr. Enstyne agreed. He turned the monster toward the exit. "Okay, baby, go get 'em! Throw 'em out on their ears!"

The monster lumbered toward the doorway.

Dr. Enstyne called out a final command. "Don't take any hot gnishes for an answer!"

4

Munsters and Monsters

MARILYN ENTERED the kitchen, where Lily was busily baking gnishes. "I'm sorry, Aunt Lily," she said. "I've looked in every closet in the lodge and I can't find a broom anywhere."

"Oh, well, I don't think I'll be able to get to the cleaning today, anyway," Lily replied. "While I have the oven on, I want to bake a big batch of gnishes. Dr. Enstyne was in here a while ago, and he just loves them. I'll make up a big supply so that even after we leave he can still have gnishes."

"That's sweet of you, Aunt Lily."

"Well, I imagine it gets lonely around here. I've never seen a resort with so few guests."

"I found out why," Marilyn said. "The place has bugs. Thackeray told me."

"I'm not surprised," Lily said. "But it won't

have bugs for long. For some reason bugs just can't live in a house that's well-stocked with gnishes."

Marilyn suddenly brightened. "There's one place I didn't look," she said. "I didn't look in the towers." She frowned. "Do towers have closets, Aunt Lily?"

"Darling, I can't answer that. There are towers and there are towers."

"I'll look," Marilyn said, turning and leaving the kitchen.

Lily continued busily with her project. She flitted from one place to another, keeping a continuing supply of gnishes coming from the oven.

A few minutes after Marilyn had gone, the monster suddenly appeared in the kitchen doorway. It raised its arms in a menacing gesture and roared its silent roar. The only sound was the squeaking of its elbows, which, in spite of Dr. Enstyn's good intentions, had not been properly oiled.

Lily, hearing the squeak, glanced back over her shoulder.

"Oh, Herman!" she said, facing back to her work. "Did you find any caves?"

Unseen and unheard by Lily, the monster once more roared its silent roar and, arms raised, moved in on her.

"I'm baking gnishes," Lily said, her back to the monster. "I said to myself when you left this morning, 'Wouldn't it be a nice surprise to have some nice hot gnishes for Herman when he comes back?' So. . . ."

Just as the monster reached her, Lily turned, hot gnish in hand, and shot it into the monster's open jaws. "This'll warm you up," she said, stepping past the monster and going to the long table.

The monster's jaws clamped shut on the gnish. Fire flashed in its eyes. A metallic shudder shook its parts. Its jaws opened wide, and it emitted a silent shriek of horror.

"Not as good as the ones I make at home," Lily said, her back to the monster once more, "but I didn't have all the usual ingredients. I had to make do with what I found in the doctor's refrigerator."

Flame flashed from the monster's throat.

"Was it warm enough, Herman?" Lily asked. "If not, I have another batch coming from the oven in a moment."

Tears—leaking oil, perhaps—rolled down the monster's cheeks.

"Well, one thing," Lily said philosophically, "the good doctor won't be bothered by bugs anymore." She left the table and headed back toward the oven. "Where are Eddie and Spot?" she asked. "Maybe they'd like a gnish."

Somewhat recovered, the monster again raised its arms in an attitude of attack. But Lily, reaching the oven, put a hand against its chest and backed it away.

"Just let me get this fresh batch out of the oven, dear," she said, intent on her project.

Enraged by this treatment, the monster once more opened its jaws and roared its silent roar. Unfortunately, at the same time, Lily pulled the tin of hot gnishes from the oven.

"Here, try this for taste," she said, shooting a steaming gnish between the monster's jaws.

The monster, though brainless, knew when it had had enough. Smoke spouting from its eyes, ears, and mouth, it fled the kitchen.

"I'll call you when the next batch is ready," Lily trilled, busily sliding a tin of filled dough into the oven.

Breathing smoke and flame, the monster pounded along the corridor in flight. Tears again streamed down its cheeks. Its eyes rolled wildly in various expressions of horror. But after a few seconds its computer regained control and set it again to accomplishing its assigned task. The monster lumbered forward, seeking out a Munster.

In the main hall it came upon Grandpa, who was deeply engrossed in a book he had found in the castle library.

The monster halted in front of Grandpa and menacingly raised its arms.

Grandpa, seated in a chair, glanced up. "Herman!" he said, surprised. "Are you back already?"

The monster set itself for the attack.

"I don't think this mountain air agrees with you," Grandpa said, rising. "You look like you have one of your headaches."

As Grandpa rose, moving past the monster, the monster lunged—and ended up seated in the chair that Grandpa had vacated.

"That's right, sit down and rest," Grandpa said.

The monster, directed by its computer, which, using mathematics, told it that it had the enemy in its grasp, clutched its own chest, supposedly crushing its adversary.

"Chills?" Grandpa asked. "Well, I'm not surprised. It gets a bit nippy in the mountains in the morning." He reached into a pocket. "I've got just the thing for you," he said, extracting a white tablet from the pocket. "It's a new aspirin. I invented it just before we left home. I haven't tried it yet, but it's sure to work. It's made out of the secret ingredients they use in making other aspirin—X-49 and alkahydrate and phosphoduraphile, plus a few secret ingredients I cooked up on my own."

Alerted by its computer that, mathematics or not, it had failed, the monster opened its jaws and roared its soundless roar.

Grandpa popped the tablet into its mouth. "You're as good as cured," he announced.

A shock wave passed through the monster. It stiffened. Its eyes quivered. Its gears rattled. Then, imitating a rocket, it shot from the chair and, trailing smoke and flame, zoomed from the room.

Grandpa looked puzzled. He took another aspirin from his pocket and studied it closely. "I may have put in a grain too much X-49," he said to himself.

The monster, meanwhile, reached the entrance to the cellar, crashed through the door, and rocketed down the steps toward the laboratory, a gutted and terrified specter of its formerly fiendish self.

After leaving the laboratory, Thackeray had secreted himself in his room, not wanting to be present when the monster attacked the Munsters

and drove them from the castle. But finally he was unable to withstand the suspense. He had to find out how terrible the Munsters' exodus had been. So sadly he left his room and, tripping on a rug, fell down the stairs to the main floor.

All was silence when he reached his destination. Gloomily he made his way along the corridor, looking for some stray part of a Munster that he might retain as a keepsake. Eventually he reached the kitchen, where, to his immense surprise, he saw Lily busily baking gnishes.

"You're still here!" Thackeray cried excitedly, rushing into the kitchen.

"Yes, I'm still here," Lily replied. "I wanted to get to the cleaning, but I just haven't had time."

"But— What I mean is, hasn't Dr. Enstyne thrown you— That is, hasn't he asked you to leave?"

It was Lily's turn to be surprised. "Why would he do that?" she asked. "He loves my gnishes."

Thackeray was dumbfounded. Then it occurred to him that perhaps his pleas had had an

effect on Dr. Enstyne, that the doctor, after thinking it over, had decided against sending the monster after the Munsters. Yes, he concluded, that had to be the explanation.

"I'm delighted!" he beamed.

"Have a gnish," Lily said, smiling.

Thackeray retreated a step. "I think I'll leave my share for Dr. Enstyne," he said. "You say he loves them so much."

"Oh, my, yes," Lily said. "He had two. Usually one is about all a person can handle at one sitting, but Dr. Enstyne asked for another." She frowned. "At least, I think that's what he was saying."

Thackeray came closer again. "Speaking of gnishes—or, rather, speaking of love—" he said, "I have a sort of delicate question I'd like to ask you. Do you mind?"

Lily smiled softly. "I know. You want my recipe."

"Not exactly," Thackeray replied. "What I really want—or at least what I *think* I want—is your niece's hand."

Lily frowned again. "I don't think it's detachable," she replied. "Marilyn is . . . well, let's just say she's 'different.' Now, if you wanted Herman's hand, or Eddie's hand, or—"

"I don't think you understand what I mean," Thackeray broke in. "What I'm trying to say is, I would like to have your permission to court your niece."

Lily peered at him, perplexed. "Are you sure?"

"Of course. Why not?"

Lily sighed. "There's something I feel duty-bound to tell you, Thackeray," she said. "You may not have noticed it. But, well, the fact is, Marilyn does not have the Munster looks."

"I think she's beautiful!" Thackeray said loyally.

"You do?"

"Absolutely. I think she's gorgeous."

"Well, with your eyes, I suppose anything is—" Lily suddenly remembered that she was not supposed to mention Thackeray's poor eyesight. She shrugged. "I suppose I've done my duty by warning you. So if you still want my

permission to court Marilyn, then, of course, the answer is yes."

Thackeray fairly glowed. "Oh, thank you, thank you," he cried. "Do you know where she is now? I'd like to get started just as soon as possible."

"She's in the towers, looking for closets," Lily replied.

"I'm off!" Thackeray cried, turning and hurrying toward the doorway.

"You're the one who said it," Lily mused.

Thackeray, reaching the doorway, struck the frame, bounced off of it and hit the opposite side, then, gaining speed, disappeared down the corridor.

Once more Lily smiled softly. "Love is blind," she murmured. Then she turned her attention back to her project.

The castle door opened and Herman, Eddie, and Spot stomped into the foyer, puffing and beating their hands and paws on their chests. Herman, closing the door, suddenly sniffed the

air. "Do you smell that?" he said to Eddie. "Isn't that—"

"Gnishes!" Eddie cried happily.

"You're right," Herman said. "It's just the touch this lodge needed, too—the odor of gnishes in the corridors. Eddie, it's almost like home!"

"Last one to the kitchen is a human being!" Eddie shouted, laughing and running ahead.

Herman clomped after him, leaving Spot, no gnish-lover, curled up in the foyer.

As he was proceeding along the corridor, Herman met Thackeray coming from the opposite direction. He paused, smiling. Thackeray, getting closer, stopped suddenly and stared, thinking Herman to be Dr. Enstyne's monster.

"You! What are you doing here?" Thackeray squeaked.

Puzzled, Herman replied in the only way he knew how—truthfully. "I'm standing," he said.

Thackeray's mouth fell open. For a second he was silent, stunned. Then he spoke. "You talk!"

"I've been talking all my life," Herman said.

"I know, I know—but the *bug*."

Herman was baffled. "The bug? A talking bug? What's that?"

"Oh, yes. You wouldn't know about that, would you?" Thackeray said. "After all, you're only a machine. You wouldn't understand." He glared at Herman. "Does Dr. Enstyne know you're up here?"

"I haven't mentioned it," Herman replied, his bafflement growing.

"You'd better get back to the cellar!" Thackeray said sternly. "Dr. Enstyne will want to see you—and *hear* you. That, I'm sure of. Now, scat!"

Dumbfounded, Herman stared at him for a moment and then walked on.

When he reached the kitchen, Eddie was already stuffing away a gnish.

"Ummmmmm! Do those look good!" Herman said.

"I'm working on my seventeenth dozen," Lily informed him. "I started out to make just a few, but Dr. Enstyne had one, and he liked it so

much, I decided to keep going. I intend to make enough so that when we leave, he'll have a year's supply of gnishes or so to remember us by."

"I'm glad to hear that Dr. Enstyne is normal," Herman said. "I just met his assistant—that Thackeray—in the corridor, and I wonder about him. He was babbling something about a talking bug."

"Oh . . . bugs . . . is he still having trouble with those bugs?" Lily asked. "I thought they'd be gone by now. You know how the bugs scatter when there's a gnish in the house."

"Lily, you sound like that Thackeray," Herman said. "What bugs?"

"That's why the lodge doesn't have any business," Lily explained. "Bugs. Thackeray told Marilyn about it."

"Oh." Herman picked up a gnish and bit off a chew. He smiled delightedly. "Better than ever," he pronounced. "Spicier, I think."

"That was what Dr. Enstyne liked about them," Lily said.

"Speaking of Dr. Enstyne, Thackeray says

he wants to see me," Herman said. "Maybe it's something about those bugs of his."

"Probably."

"Thackeray says he's in the cellar."

"That's probably where the bugs are," Lily replied.

"Well, I want to rest first," Herman said. "Then I'll go down and see what I can do to help him."

"That's very nice of you, Herman," Lily said. "And you might take him a few more—" She suddenly interrupted herself, turned to Herman, and looked at him curiously.

"Take him a few more what?" Herman asked.

"I was going to say 'gnishes,'" Lily replied, continuing to stare at Herman.

"All right, I will. I'll—" Herman stared back at Lily, just as curiously. "Lily, what's the matter?"

"Something just occurred to me," she said. "When you came into the kitchen just now, you seemed surprised to find the gnishes."

"Of course. You didn't say you were going

to do any baking today, Lily.”

“But, Herman, you were in here before. You came into the kitchen and had two gnishes.”

Herman smiled. “Lily, I’ve been with Eddie and Spot all morning.”

“Herman, I *saw* you!”

He shook his head. “I’ve been out. All morning.”

She sighed. “Well, if you say so. But, I’m positive I—” She shrugged, dismissing the matter. “It must be this mountain air,” she said. “After all, there couldn’t be two Hermans, could there?”

Herman laughed. “Not unless Dr. Enstyne is manufacturing Hermans in the cellar,” he said.

Lily and Eddie joined in the laughter.

Thackeray, on his way to the towers in search of Marilyn, got as far as the front foyer. Then he stopped abruptly and peered through his thick-lensed spectacles into the dimness. Fuzzily, a shape took form. Recognizing it, his eyes lighted. A broad grin spread itself across his face.

"Marilyn! Here you are!" he cried.

Spot raised his head and looked out from his heavy eyelids at Thackeray. "Rorrrrrph," he grumbled, annoyed at having his nap disturbed.

"Well, how're things in the towers?" Thackeray chuckled. "Find any brooms?" Then, sobering, he explained, "That's a little joke."

"Rrrrrrmph," Spot growled sourly.

"No, I guess you're right," Thackeray admitted. "It wasn't funny. I never have been much of a joke teller. I'm a serious type. Always have been. I remember what my father is supposed to have said when he first saw me. 'This is serious!' he said. Apparently he knew I would grow up to be a serious fellow—I think."

Spot curled up again, growling testily.

"Marilyn," Thackeray went on, "I know we haven't known each other long. But there is such a thing, I hear, as compatibility at first sight. And who's to say that compatibility can't turn into something more romantic?" He frowned seriously. "Frankly, I would like the opportunity to discuss the matter with you. Is that possible?"

“Mgggrbrpt.”

Thackeray grinned. “Wonderful! Now, then, where shall we meet? A secluded spot. That’s the way it’s done—I think.” He speculated in silence for a second, then said, “What would you say to the cemetery? It’s secluded. No one ever goes there. Except, of course, Dr. Enstyne and I when we’re lost. Could you meet me, say, at midnight, in the cemetery?”

Spot began to snore.

“Charming!” Thackeray beamed. “Midnight it is, then. In the cemetery.” He fluttered his fingers. “Ta-ta for now!”

“Snawwwwwwwww,” Spot snored.

5

"Munsters, Go Home!"

THACKERAY SPENT the rest of the morning and afternoon trying to find his way back to the laboratory. It was early evening when he finally reached it. He found Dr. Enstyne busily working on the monster, which was stretched out on the table.

"I'm sorry I'm late, Doctor," Thackeray apologized.

"Late what?" Dr. Enstyne replied.

"I haven't been here," Thackeray explained. "I took a wrong turn in the dining room and I've been trying to find my way back all afternoon."

"I didn't miss you," Dr. Enstyne said. "I've been talking to you all this time." He pointed. "Isn't that you?"

Thackeray looked closely at what Dr. Enstyne

was pointing to. "I think that's the post that holds up the ceiling," he said.

"It's a smart post," Dr. Enstyne said. "I got better answers out of it than I get out of you. You're fired. I'm hiring the post."

Thackeray looked pained. "Are you serious?"

"That's for me to know and you to find out," Dr. Enstyne replied. "Now, get to work before I fire you and hire some post to do it for you!"

Thackeray moved closer to the table. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm cooking up a surprise for those Munsters. I've got to get them out of the castle. And with what I'm cooking up, they'll leave so fast, they'll be gone before they even start!"

It was Thackeray who was surprised. "I thought you gave up on that idea," he said. "You said you were going to send the monster after them. But then I saw that they were still here, so I assumed that you'd changed your mind."

"Why would I change my mind? I have a perfectly gorgeous mind. What would I change it for? A quart of milk and a pound of honey?"

"I mean, I thought you'd decided to let the Munsters stay."

"That's even crazier than changing my mind for a quart of milk and a pound of honey," Dr. Enstyne said. "Why would I let them stay? With them here, I can't get any work done."

"But they don't interfere, Doctor."

"Sure they do. They keep me busy trying to figure out how to get them out. I can't get any work done. You don't call that interfering? What do you call it? A quart of milk and a pound of honey, I suppose."

"No, sir." Thackeray thought for a moment, then said, "But if you sent the monster after them, how is it that they're still here?"

"They cheated," Dr. Enstyne grumbled.

"How?"

"Number one, they didn't leave. That's cheating like nobody ever cheated before. Number two, they pulled a flamethrower on my monster."

Thackeray chuckled. "Really, Doctor—a flamethrower?"

Dr. Enstyne lifted the front panel off the

monster's chest. "Look in there," he said. "Burnt out like it had a four-alarm fire."

Thackeray looked. "My heavens!"

"It couldn't be worse if he'd been eating gnishes," Dr. Enstyne said. "So they must have pulled a flamethrower on him. What else could do that kind of damage? Except gnishes."

"That'll take some work, repairing the damage," Thackeray said. "Shall we get started?"

"First I've got to fix up my surprise," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Oh? And that is what?"

"It's my monster's voice," Dr. Enstyne said.

Thackeray was elated. "You found the bug! You licked the problem!"

"Yes, I licked it. It tasted like peppermint. But it didn't help. The monster still can't talk."

"But you just said—"

"I said it's got a voice. But it isn't its own voice. It's *my* voice."

"I don't think I—"

"Look here," Dr. Enstyne said, pointing.

Thackeray looked. Dr. Enstyne had removed



the top of the monster's skull and had placed a small machine inside its head.

"That's a tape recorder," Dr. Enstyne explained. "It's got a message on it. It says 'Munsters, go home!' It says 'Don't just stand there—scat!' "

"Oh . . . fine, fine," Thackeray said dimly. "But what's the point of it?"

"To get those Munsters out, that's the point of it."

"But if the monster couldn't get rid of them the first time, I don't see—"

Dr. Enstyne put down his tools. "Why haven't we used the monster to conquer the world?" he said.

"Because it can't talk."

"Right. Now . . . why didn't it scare the Munsters?"

"Because. . . ." Thackeray nodded vaguely. "I'm beginning to see—I think."

"Because it couldn't talk. I can prove it to you scientifically," Dr. Enstyne said. "Like one and one is two."

"How?"

"How much is one and one?"

"Two."

"There you are—you see?"

Thackeray nodded. "Yes, now I see."

"Then don't just stand there. Help me get my monster in working order again."

Thackeray shook his head. "I can't do that, Doctor. You see, I don't want the Munsters to leave. I want them to stay."

"You're out of your noodle!" Dr. Enstyne snapped.

"No. I'm in love."

"That's what I said. You're out of your noodle. How could anybody be in love with a whole family?"

"Not the whole family. Just one. Marilyn. In fact, tonight I plan to ask her to be Mrs. Thackeray."

Dr. Enstyne shook his head. "You can't do that."

"Doctor, I will not be talked out of this. I intend to ask Marilyn to marry me."

Dr. Enstyne groaned. "I should have hired the post in the first place," he said. He shrugged. "All right, I'll repair the monster myself. Go sit in a corner. Or, better yet, hold up the ceiling. That will free the post to help me with the work."

By midevening Dr. Enstyne had the monster repaired and on its feet.

"Look at that!" he crowed to Thackeray, who was sitting in a corner. "Isn't that gorgeous? A real live fake monster! All ready to scare the pants off the whole world!"

"If it could only talk," Thackeray said.

"Aha! Listen to this!"

Dr. Enstyne punched a button on the monster's back.

"Munsters, get out!" the monster raged in Dr. Enstyne's voice.

"Is *that* all it says?" Thackeray sniffed.

"Just keep listening!" Dr. Enstyne replied, grinning. "I taped a whole commercial!"

"Enstyne, si! Munsters, no!" the monster roared. "Pack up your gnishes in your old kit

bag, and go, go, go! . . . Do it now! . . . You take the high road, and while you're at it, take the low road, too! . . . Get out and get under! Or, better yet, just get out! . . . No vacancy! . . . Don't call me and I won't call you! . . . Parting is the best deal we could get! . . . Munsters, Munsters, go away; come again some other day! Like the seventh Tuesday in March!"

Thackeray nodded, impressed. "The message comes through," he said.

Dr. Enstyne pointed the monster toward the doorway. "Go!" he cried, punching another button.

The monster came to life and clomped toward the exit, shouting, "Enstyne, si! Munsters, no! . . . Pack up your gnishes in your old kit bag, and go, go, go! . . . Do it now! . . . You take the. . ."

A moment later the monster passed out of hearing range.

"In about a minute, you're going to hear the patter of big feet!" Dr. Enstyne cackled. "It'll be the Munsters on the run!"

"I'm afraid so," Thackeray sighed. "Ah, Love, where art thou? Thou hast flown on the wings of fear!"

"That's even better," Dr. Enstyne said. "Flying is faster."

A funny thing happened to the monster on the way to the Great Hall, however. As it was chugging up the stairs, it stumbled on the second step from the top. It didn't fall, but it was shaken. And in the accident the tape recorder was jiggled. The result was that the tape speeded up. And its message, once a roar, became a high-pitched squeal.

"Pack up your gnishes in your old kit bag" now came out, "Pattle-puttle-pittle-pittle-pattle-puttle-pootle-pittle-puttle-pottle-pittle."

Being only inhuman, the monster was unaware of the fact that it now sounded like a frantic mouse. Onward it clomped, up the steps, down the corridor, and into the Great Hall, where Lily, Grandpa, and Marilyn were resting after dinner.

"Pattle-puttle-pittle," the monster squeaked.

Lily sat up. "Herman! Your voice!"

"You sound terrible, Uncle Herman!" Marilyn said in a worried voice.

"You need an adjustment," Grandpa said. "I'll get a pair of pliers."

"Pittle-pattle-puttle," the monster squealed.

"Pliers! It isn't pliers he needs!" Lily said. "Don't you recognize that? Herman has laryngitis. I knew it! I knew he'd catch cold—out in those caves all morning!" She got to her feet and pointed up the stairs. "Up to bed with you, Herman!"

"Pattle-puttle-pittle!" the monster protested.

"It won't do any good to argue," Lily said. "I can't understand a word you're saying." She advanced toward the monster. As it raised its arms in a threatening gesture, she caught it by the elbow, whipped it around, and gave it a firm push toward the stairs. "Up to bed!" she insisted. "You need a hot-water bottle, not a pair of pliers."

"You and your old home remedies," Grandpa

grumbled. "Give me five minutes with a pair of pliers, and he'd be good as new. Maybe even better."

"Up! Up!" Lily said, prodding the monster toward the stairs.

"Pittle-pottle-puttle-pattle!"

"Herman! Do as I say!"

Still protesting, but powerless against Lily's determined prodding, the monster marched up the stairs.

"You know," Marilyn said to Grandpa as Lily and the monster disappeared, "there's something strange about that. I saw Uncle Herman just a few minutes ago. And he didn't have laryngitis then."

Grandpa snapped his fingers. "It can come on just like that!" he said.

"Well, maybe. . . ."

"Where did you see him?" Grandpa asked.

"In the corridor. He was looking for the entrance to the cellar. He said that Thackeray had told him that Dr. Enstyre wanted to ask his advice about the bugs."

"What does Herman know about bugs?"

"I don't know. But apparently Dr. Enstyne thinks he knows something about them." She frowned. "That's something else strange," she said. "I haven't seen any bugs around here."

Grandpa cackled. "You've seen Enstyne and that Thackeray," he said. "They're *both* bugs, if you ask me."

"Oh, Grandpa!" Marilyn said, giggling.

For almost a half-hour, Herman had been opening doors, one after another, looking for a way to the cellar. Finally, now, he found the right door. And in the spirit of good-fellowship he proceeded down the steps to find Dr. Enstyne and advise him on the problem of the bugs.

Reaching another door, Herman opened it and looked in. He saw Dr. Enstyne perched on a stool, smiling happily. He seemed to be waiting. Herman assumed that he was waiting for him.

"Here I am," he announced, entering the laboratory.

Startled, Dr. Enstyne jumped off the stool. "Who's that?"

Herman walked toward him. "It's me, Doctor."

Dr. Enstyne bent forward, staring. Then suddenly he straightened, startled once more. "It's you!"

"That's what I said," Herman replied.

Dr. Enstyne was flabbergasted. "You're talking! That's not *me* talking. That's *you* talking!"

Herman nodded. "I'll go along with that," he said. "Now, about—"

"You got the bugs out!" Dr. Enstyne cried joyfully. "How did you do it?"

"Well, actually, I haven't got the bugs out yet," Herman said. "But I thought—"

"The bugs are out!" Dr. Enstyne shouted. "Don't tell me the bugs aren't out. I heard you."

"But I didn't *say* the bugs were out," Herman insisted.

"You don't have to say it," Dr. Enstyne said. "It's obvious. Anybody can tell that. The bugs are out!"

"All right, if you say so," Herman replied resignedly. "In that case, I guess you have no more need for me."

"Hah-hoo-hoo!" Dr. Enstyne moaned. "No more need for you? This is just the beginning! Now my dream can come true!"

"Oh?" Herman said, puzzled.

"But first I must find out what I did right," Dr. Enstyne said. "Right now, the bugs are out. But how do I know? Maybe tomorrow the bugs'll be back in. So I must find out how I got the bugs out when they were in, so when they get in again I can get them out. The bugs, that is."

Herman nodded dimly. "I don't think I understand that, Doctor."

"You're not supposed to understand," Dr. Enstyne told him. "What do you think you are? A human being? Somebody with rights? What makes you think you have to understand? All you have to do is what I tell you. Is that clear?"

"It's clear, all right," Herman said. "But—"

"Don't but me no buts," Dr. Enstyne said gruffly. "Lie down on the table. I must take you

apart and get your insides outside, so I can see what I did right when I had your insides outside the last time."

Herman looked at the table, then shrugged. He decided to humor the doctor.

"I hope this won't take long," he said, stretching out on the table.

"How could it take long? I know you like an open book. Better yet, I know you like an open monster."

"Munster."

"Don't talk about the departed," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Pardon?"

"Not pardon. Parted. Your pronunciation isn't so hot. But you're talking, so why should I complain?" He began removing the bolts from Herman's neck. "That's funny," he said. "These bolts come out clockwise. They should come out counterclockwise." He shrugged. "Oh, well, maybe not. Maybe I just don't remember so well anymore. Too bad. Your memory starts to go, then, the next thing you know, it's your eyes."

"If you'd tell me what you're looking for, maybe I could help you," Herman said.

"I'm looking for the place where the bugs aren't."

"Well, they're not where you're looking, I can tell you that."

"Then this is the place," Dr. Enstyne said, setting Herman's head aside.

"Don't misplace that," Herman said.

"Don't worry. I'm a scientist, as calm as a cucumber. I never lose my head." He began removing Herman's right arm. "I don't recognize these bolts at all," he said. "What's happened here?" He opened Herman's shirt and peered at his chest. "Where's the plate that opens to where the bugs are?" he said, mystified. "Monster, what's happened to you?"

"Munster," Herman said, correcting him.

"Don't talk Munsters to me! Those Munsters are gone!"

"Gone where?" Herman asked. "They're right here. They're upstairs."

Dr. Enstyne clapped his hands to his cheeks

in a gesture of despair. "I should have known! They got to you! They ruined you!"

"I'd be fine if you'd put my head back on," Herman said sharply.

"No! No! You're ruined! Who did it? Who put you together like this?"

"Grandpa," Herman replied. "And I think he did a darn swell job of it!"

"Ruined!" Dr. Enstyne moaned. "That nasty old man! He took you apart and put you together wrong! Ruined!"

"I felt fine until I came down here," Herman grumbled.

"Thackeray!" Dr. Enstyne wailed. "I've got to find Thackeray. We've got to take you *all* apart and put you *all* together again. It's the only way. We've got to start from scratch."

"Are you back to those bugs again?" Herman asked.

Dr. Enstyne headed for the door. "Don't move!" he said. "I've got to find Thackeray!"

"Where could I go without my head?"

But Dr. Enstyne didn't hear. He was already

on his way up the stairs, on his way to find Thackeray.

Herman sighed disgustedly. "With his eyes, he may never find Thackeray," he said to himself. "I may stay here forever." He smiled. "I might as well make the best of it and catch up on my sleep. After all, this *is* a vacation."

A few moments later, Herman dozed off, his left hand resting comfortably on his stomach, his right arm lying on the floor, and his head sitting on a nearby table. He was—it might be said—totally relaxed.

6

Wherefore Art Thou Spot?

STANDING JUST inside the entrance to the cemetery, Thackeray held his watch close to the tip of his nose and peered steadily at it. The hands pointed to nine-thirty.

"Midnight, right on the head," he said to himself. "She should be here any second."

Earlier, Thackeray had thought that Marilyn would not be able to keep their appointment. He had assumed that the monster, equipped finally with a voice, would chase the Munsters, one and all, from the castle. But to his great surprise and intense delight, when he had emerged from the cellar he had found the Munsters—some of them, anyway—still in residence. He had spotted two of them—which two, he was not sure—in the Great Hall, and another one, a small one, in the kitchen. Consequently, he

had reached the conclusion that the monster had failed again, and that Marilyn, when the time came, would meet him in the cemetery.

Thackeray stared fixedly at his watch again. This time, the hands read 9:32. "Half-past midnight!" he said disappointedly. "That certainly was a quick thirty minutes. It's true what they say—time flies."

Thackeray waited another few minutes—until 9:35 (he thought it was 1:15)—then faced the fact that Marilyn was not going to appear. At first he was sad. Then he became furious.

"Who does she think I am, anyway? A nobody?" he raged. "No one can treat me this way! Least of all, not a girl! Wait till I see her! Oh, the things I'll tell her! I'll say—I'll say, 'Who do you think I am, anyway? A nobody?'"

Thackeray fumed for a moment more, then muttered, "On second thought, maybe it would be better to write her a letter. If I said to her, 'Who do you think I am, anyway, a nobody?' she might say, 'Yes.' Then what would I say?"

He began to pace and grumble. "One thing,

I'll certainly never speak to her again. That will show her. Oh, she'll be sorry! I'll meet her in the corridor, and I'll breeze right past her. Not a word!"

At that moment, Spot came lumbering from the castle, intending to get a breath of fresh air. Ambling along, Spot spotted Thackeray. Curious, he wandered over and watched him as he paced back and forth, denouncing Marilyn. The sight was so uninteresting that Spot soon dozed off. And a few minutes later, as Spot lay there sleeping, Thackeray stumbled over him and fell flat on the ground. The accident had two results. It stopped Thackeray's babbling for a second, and it woke up Spot.

The first result was quickly nullified. "Marilyn!" Thackeray cried happily. "You're here!"

"Rormph!" Spot grumbled, annoyed at having been awakened so rudely.

Thackeray leaped to his feet. "I'm sorry!" he said. "Did you hear what I was saying? I apologize! Forgive me, Marilyn!"

"Rumpghrpt," Spot growled.

Thackeray beamed. "Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you! I was out of my mind! I didn't know what I was saying." He calmed down a bit. "But now you're here. And we have so much to talk about. Our whole future together. Or am I being hasty? Tell me, Marilyn, do I dare hope that you—"

Spot, who had dozed off again, began to snore loudly.

"You do!" Thackeray cried joyfully. "Then, my dear, let us plan for the days, the months, the years ahead. Now, as I see it. . . ."

Thackeray babbled on, as Spot, deaf to Thackeray's enthusiasms, slept.

In the Great Hall, Grandpa closed the book he was reading, stretched, then got up out of the chair he occupied. "Reading makes me sleepy," he said to Marilyn, who was seated in another chair, also with a book. "I need a little exercise to wake me up. I think I'll go down to the laboratory for a while."

Marilyn smiled. "What kind of exercise will

you get down there, Grandpa?"

"Brain exercise," he replied. "The best kind. The great thing about exercising your brain instead of your body is that it doesn't give you sore muscles the next morning."

"Have fun," Marilyn said.

"I intend to," Grandpa said, departing. "What's a vacation for?"

Grandpa left the Great Hall, walked down the corridor to the entrance to the cellar, descended the stairs, then entered the laboratory. There, on a table, he found the major portion of Herman, sound asleep.

Puzzled, Grandpa shook him. "Herman! Wake up!"

On a nearby table, Herman's eyes opened. He peered at Grandpa fuzzily. "Oh, hello, Grandpa."

Grandpa turned and spoke to Herman's head. "What are you doing down here? You're supposed to be in bed with a hot-water bottle. And what happened to your laryngitis?"

"Don't I have it?" Herman asked. "Maybe Dr.

Enstyne put it somewhere. Look around."

"Laryngitis is a sore throat!" Grandpa said.

"Oh. Well, then I must have lost it. I don't seem to have it."

Grandpa groaned. Then he picked up Herman's head, carried it to the other table, and began reattaching it to his body.

"Will you put my arm on first, please?" Herman said.

"Why?"

"I want to scratch my head. I've got an itch."

"Well, you can't scratch it till I get it on."

"I could if you'd put my arm on, then hand it to me," Herman said.

"First things first—head, then arm," Grandpa insisted. "That's the way I built you, and that's the way I'm going to put you back together. Who took you apart, anyway?"

"Dr. Enstyne."

"Why?"

"He wasn't looking for bugs," Herman replied.

"What kind of a reason is that!"

"A poor reason," Herman replied. "But it

was his reason. At least, that's what he said. He said he wanted to find out where the bugs weren't."

Having attached Herman's head, Grandpa now began putting his arm back on. "If there are any bugs around here, I think they're in Dr. Enstyne's brain," he grumbled. "What kind of a lodge keeper is he, anyway? Taking his guests apart and leaving them lying all over the laboratory!"

"I sort of like him," Herman said. "He's different."

"There, now you're all in one piece again," Grandpa said.

Herman got up off the table. "I think I'd better wait till the doctor comes back," he said. "If he returns and finds me gone, he might worry."

"You'd better get up to your room and get into bed with that hot-water bottle, that's what you'd better do," Grandpa said.

Herman looked at him, baffled. "What for?"

"Because that's where Lily put you. She thinks it will cure your cold."

"I don't—"

"I don't care what you don't," Grandpa said. "You know how Lily is. If she finds you out roaming around when you're supposed to be in bed with a hot-water bottle, she'll raise the roof."

Herman shook his head. "This isn't going to be my night," he said. "Lily thinks I have a cold. Dr. Enstyne thinks I have bugs—or don't have bugs, one or the other. Maybe I'd *better* go to bed. I think it might be the safest thing I could do."

"Now you're making sense!" Grandpa said. "Come on. I'll lead the way. I'll scout for Lily. I don't want her to catch you up out of bed."

Grandpa left the laboratory first, and Herman followed. They tiptoed up the steps to the main floor. Then Grandpa whispered, "We'd better use the back stairs to get to your room. Lily usually uses the front stairs."

"Anything you say," Herman replied wearily.

They tiptoed down the corridor to the rear stairs, then ascended quietly toward the second floor and safety.

In Herman's room, Lily had just tucked the covers around the monster's throat. "Comfy?" she smiled.

"Pattle-puttle," the monster squeaked.

"That's the worst case of laryngitis I ever heard, Herman," Lily said. "I can't understand a word you're saying." She smiled. "But you'll be better tomorrow. All you need is rest and warmth. Are you sure that hot-water bottle is hot enough?"

"Pittle-pottle."

"Fine. Now, you sleep. I'll look in on you again in an hour or so, just to be sure you're all right." She moved toward the door. "Good night, Herman."

"Pattle-pottle."

Lily stepped out of the room and closed the door behind her. Then, sighing, she walked down the corridor and headed down the front stairs.

The instant the bedroom door closed, the monster threw back the covers and leaped out of bed. Frantic, it hurried to the door, grasped the knob, then stopped. Its antennae had picked

up the sound of voices whispering on the other side of the door.

The monster leaped back, looked frantically about the room for a second, then spotted a closet door. It rushed to the door, opened it, scampered into the closet, and quickly but quietly closed the door behind it.

A moment later, the door of the room opened. Grandpa looked in. "All clear!" he stage-whispered.

Grandpa and Herman tiptoed into the room. Then Grandpa closed the door.

"Ahhh, we made it," Grandpa said, relieved. "Now, you hop into bed."

"I want to take a hot shower first," Herman said. "Then I'll be glad to hop into bed. That walk in the mountains this morning wore me out."

"All right, but make it a short shower," Grandpa said. "Lily is likely to come in here, and when she does, I want you to be in bed—with a hot-water bottle."

Herman went to the bed. "The hot-water

bottle is already here," he said. "That's service for you."

"Lily probably gave it to you when she put you to bed the first time," Grandpa said.

Herman frowned. "I must be more weary than I realize," he said. "I don't remember that at all."

"Well, that's not important," Grandpa said. "What's important is that you get that shower and then get into bed. Go on—get a move on!"

Herman headed for the bath, and Grandpa began straightening the covers on the bed.

The closet door slowly opened behind Grandpa. A monster eye peeked out. Then the door opened wider, and the rest of the monster appeared. Quietly it began moving toward the door.

But at that moment Grandpa straightened, turned, and saw the monster.

"Herman! Will you get into that shower?"

"Pittle-pottle."

"See! Now your laryngitis is back!"

Grandpa stomped across the room to the monster, got it by the shoulders, whirled it around,



and propelled it toward the bath. "Enough of this dillydallying! Take your shower and get it over with!"

Grandpa opened the door of the bath, pushed "Herman" through the doorway, then slammed the door shut. He shook his head in dismay, then went back to the bed to fluff up the pillows.

Herman, in the tub behind the shower curtain, heard the slam of the door. "Is that you, Grandpa?" he called out.

"Pattle-pittle."

"I can't hear you," Herman said. "The shower is making too much noise."

"Pottle-pattle."

"Will you hand me a towel, Grandpa?" Herman called.

The monster's arm reached out, picked up a towel, and held it out toward the shower.

At the same moment Herman's hand appeared. It took the towel. Then the hand and the towel disappeared behind the curtain. A second later Herman's foot, then his leg, appeared.

The monster began to vibrate. It chugged

toward the tub. Reaching the tub, it raised a foot and a leg and put them into the shower.

As more of Herman appeared, more of the monster disappeared. By the time Herman got completely out, the monster had disappeared behind the curtain.

Herman finished drying himself, then returned to the bedroom. "Thanks for handing me the towel," he said to Grandpa.

Grandpa stared at him. "Your laryngitis is better, but your mind is worse," he said. "What towel?"

"The towel you—" Herman interrupted himself. "Never mind. If I said 'The towel you handed me in the shower,' you'd say 'What towel I handed you in the shower?' and I'd say 'The bath towel you handed me in the shower,' and it would just go on and on like that until you finally convinced me that I wasn't even in the shower. So let's not start it. As I said before, this just isn't my night."

"It won't be your night if Lily catches you out of bed," Grandpa said. "Get in there and cuddle

up with that hot-water bottle."

"Gladly," Herman said wearily.

Yawning, he got into bed and pulled up the covers. "I could sleep for a week," he said.

"Just sleep till morning and I'll be satisfied," Grandpa replied. He moved toward the door. "I'll go tell Lily that I just popped in on you and that you were sleeping like a baby. Good night, Herman."

Herman was already snoring.

Grandpa smiled, then tiptoed out.

A few minutes after he had gone, the bathroom door slowly opened. The monster peeked out. It saw Herman asleep in the bed. Quickly the door closed. Then, seconds later, the door opened again. This time the monster stepped out of the bathroom and quietly headed for the exit. Reaching the door, it opened it, entered the corridor, then softly closed it.

The monster paused for a second. Its motors whirred, producing a sound that was much like a sigh of relief. Then, as fast as it could move, it headed for the back stairs.

Dr. Enstyne, looking for Thackeray, blundered out the rear door of the castle and stormed toward the cemetery, thinking he had entered the Great Hall. Suddenly he heard a voice—Thackeray's voice—and he halted.

"I see a little white cottage on a hill with a picket fence," Thackeray was saying.

"That's preposterous!" Dr. Enstyne boomed. "Who ever heard of a hill with a picket fence? What do you want to put a picket fence around a hill for? You afraid somebody's going to steal it? What would anybody want with a hill? And a hill with a picket fence around it, to boot? You couldn't even climb it. You'd tear your pants on the picket fence!"

"Doctor?" Thackeray said, looking around.

"It isn't a hill with a picket fence, I'll tell you that!" Dr. Enstyne growled.

"Doctor, do you mind?" Thackeray said coolly. "You're interrupting a private conversation!"

"Between you and whom?" Dr. Enstyne asked. "You and a picket fence?"

"I'm referring to Marilyn, my intended."

"Your intended what?"

"My intended mate, that's what!"

"You are crazy! You want to marry a girl that's intended? Find yourself a healthy girl. A girl that's intended, she won't live long enough to go on the honeymoon."

"Doctor, I'm sorry, but my mind is made up. There is nothing you can say that will make me change my plans."

"Suppose I told you that the monster with the bugs in it is now the monster with the bugs out of it?"

"Not even that would—" Thackeray leaned slightly in the direction of Dr. Enstyne. "You mean—"

"Would I say it if I didn't mean it? Sure, I'd say it if I didn't mean it. But in this case I mean it. The monster talks."

"Are you positive?" Thackeray asked doubtfully.

"I talked to it myself," Dr. Enstyne said. " 'Hello, Monster,' I said. 'Hello, Dr. Enstyne,' it replied. 'How's the monster business?' I asked.

‘Fine. How’s the doctor business?’ it replied. Is that talk, or is that talk? You’re asking me, I’ll tell you. That’s talk! That’s talk with a capital A.”

“I can hardly believe it!” Thackeray said excitedly. “After all these months! Finally! It talks!”

“It’s in the laboratory waiting for us,” Dr. Enstyne said. “It needs a little putting together. That’s why I was looking for you. Together, we’ll put it back together.”

“Couldn’t you do that without me?” Thackeray said.

“Normally, yes. But this time, no. That foxy Grandpa Munster took it apart and put it back together all wrong. I need somebody to read the blueprints to me when I hook it up right again. Come along.”

“I will—but later,” Thackeray said.

“Later!” Dr. Enstyne exploded. “What’s more important than putting together a monster!”

“Marilyn and I are planning our future,” Thackeray explained. “That is more important.”

Dr. Enstyne clutched his head in anguish. "A girl is more important than a monster? I won't listen to such rubbish! You want a girl? All right! Come help me put the monster back together, and then after that I'll build you a girl. I'll build you a better girl than this one you have here. I'll build you a girl that's also a drinking fountain. That way, she'll be of some practical use."

"But she won't be Marilyn," Thackeray pointed out.

"Why not? You want to call her Marilyn, call her Marilyn. What do I care?"

"But she wouldn't be *this* Marilyn," Thackeray protested.

Dr. Enstyne looked down at Spot. "I'll make you a deal," he said. "When I build you a girl, I'll use this one for the main part. I'll just add the drinking fountain. That way, it's the same Marilyn, only better—when you step on her foot, you'll get a spout of water."

Thackeray shook his head. "I like her just the way she is," he said. "And right now I'm going back to the castle and—"

"What do you mean, 'back to the castle?' We're in the Great Hall right now."

Thackeray looked about. "Are we? I thought we were in the cemetery."

"What a crazy idea!" Dr. Enstyne said. "You think I don't know my Great Hall from my cemetery?"

"But I made an appointment to meet Marilyn in the cemetery, and this is where she came."

Dr. Enstyne nodded. "You're right. I don't know my Great Hall from my cemetery."

"As I was saying," Thackeray went on, "I am now going back to the castle and ask for Marilyn's hand."

"If you want me to turn her into a drinking fountain, you'd better get more than her hand," Dr. Enstyne said. "Get her foot, too—to step on."

"What I mean is," Thackeray said, "I'm going to ask Marilyn's aunt to give Marilyn permission to marry me."

"Maybe you'd better ask the girl first."

"Oh, I did," Thackeray said, smiling.

"What did she say?"

"In her own shy way, she said yes."

"You wouldn't get that out of a drinking fountain," Dr. Enstyne said. "You'd get a gurgle."

Thackeray spoke to Spot, who was sound asleep. "Darling, I'm going to speak to your Aunt Lily now," he said. "Wait for me here. And in a few minutes I will return—on the wings of joy!"

"You'd be safer on roller skates," Dr. Enstyne grumbled.

"Doctor, after that I'll join you in the laboratory and help you reconstruct the monster," Thackeray said.

"All right, if that's the best deal I can get. But don't be too long about it. We've got a talking monster now. As soon as we get it back together, we can take over the world."

"It will be a happier world with Marilyn at my side," Thackeray said dreamily.

"Who cares what shape it's in?" Dr. Enstyne said. "It'll still be an exclusive. We'll be the only

scientists in the world with a world of our own. We'll be famous. People will come from all over the world just to look at us and see our world."

Side by side, the two walked back toward the castle.

"I may mention that fact to Marilyn's aunt," Thackeray said. "It might impress her to know that I will soon be co-owner of the world."

"The *only* world. Don't forget that part," Dr. Enstyne said. "When a lot of people have their own worlds, it's not such a big deal. But when you have the only world around, that's something!"

"I'll mention that fact," Thackeray agreed.

When they reached the entrance to the cellar, Thackeray and Dr. Enstyne parted. Thackeray walked on toward the Great Hall, and Dr. Enstyne descended toward his laboratory.

Entering the lab, Dr. Enstyne went to the table where he had left Herman. The monster was now stretched out on the table, breathing heavily.

"Hey! Your head is back on!" Dr. Enstyne

said. "What have you been doing, experimenting on yourself? That's dangerous. Never fiddle around with a monster. Especially if you happen to *be* a monster. What does a monster know about monsters? You could wire the wrong wire to the wrong wire, and then you know what would happen? We'd get the bugs back in!"

"Piddle-poddle," the monster said.

Dr. Enstyne clapped his hands to his cheeks in a gesture of woe. "You did it! The bugs are back!"

"Pittle-pottle," the monster said.

"Don't say it!" Dr. Enstyne groaned. "Ruined! The world was in my grasp, and now all I have is a pile of junk that says 'pattle-puttle.' Ruined!"

Dr. Enstyne got the monster by the shoulders and shook it. "Talk to me as you did before! Talk to me as you did with the bugs out!"

The shaking jarred the tape recorder in the monster, and the jarring corrected the malfunction in the mechanism. All of a sudden, Dr. Enstyne heard his own voice speaking to him.

"Pack up your gnishes in your old kit bag, and

go, go, go!" the monster said. "Do it now!"

Dr. Enstyne slumped to a stool. "My own monster!" he wailed. "With my own voice it's telling me to go, go, go!"

"You take the high road, and while you're at it, take the low road, too!"

"Talk to me some pattle-puttle," Dr. Enstyne moaned. "It doesn't hurt so much!"

7

An Unexpected Announcement

ON THE WINGS of joy, Thackeray strode into the Great Hall. He saw two Munsters seated in chairs near the fireplace and marched up to them.

Lily, who was dozing, suddenly awoke. "Oh, Thackeray! Hello there."

Marilyn raised her eyes from the book she was reading. "Hello, Thackeray."

For a second, Thackeray, hearing two female voices, was confused. His confidence faltered. "I . . . uh . . . I'm looking for Marilyn's aunt."

"I'm right here, Thackeray," Lily replied.

Confidence returned. "I have great news," he said to Lily. "You may be a bit surprised. It happened so quickly. But, of course, if you prefer, we can have a long engagement. Say, to the end of the week or so."

Lily looked at Marilyn. Marilyn looked at Lily. Then they both looked at Thackeray.

"Are you engaged, Thackeray?" Lily asked.

"Yes," he said, grinning. "She just said yes."

"That's wonderful!" Marilyn said.

Thackeray turned to her. "Thank you, whoever you are."

"I think it's wonderful, too, Thackeray," Lily said. "I'm sure you'll be very happy. When will it be?"

"As soon as possible, I hope," Thackeray replied. "I thought you might want to have something to say about it."

Lily looked puzzled. "Well. . . . Oh! You mean you want my advice? Well, if you're sure you're in love, then I see no point in waiting—that is, if you can support a family."

"I don't think there'll be any problem about that," Thackeray said. "I intend to become half-owner of the entire world any day now."

"Well, that's a start," Lily said.

"Half-owner of the entire world, Thackeray?" Marilyn said curiously.

"Dr. Enstyne will have the other half," Thackeray said. "Which is only fair. After all, it was his idea. I probably wouldn't even have thought of it. Dr. Enstyne is the one with vision."

Lily and Marilyn exchanged looks again. They nodded to each other knowingly, indicating their agreement that Thackeray was not completely sound in the mind.

"Does the young lady know about your prospects—half-ownership of the entire world?" Lily asked Thackeray.

"Not yet. I haven't told her. I wanted her to love me for myself alone."

"Oh, I'm sure she does," Lily said.

Thackeray beamed. "Has she said so?"

"Why, I don't know. *Has* she said so?" Lily replied.

"I mean, has she told you?"

Lily frowned. "Do I know her, Thackeray?"

Now it was Thackeray who was puzzled. Once more his confidence deserted him. "You *are* Marilyn's aunt, aren't you?" he asked. "I *am* still in the castle, am I not?"

"Yes, of course," Lily replied. "But what gave you the notion that I'm acquainted with your intended?"

"You don't know your own niece?"

"I have only one niece, Thackeray—Marilyn."

"That's who!" Thackeray said irritably.

"What who?"

"*The* who!"

"The *who* who?"

"Marilyn is who."

Lily turned to Marilyn. "Are you who, dear?"

"Who who?" Marilyn asked.

"*The* who—whoever that is," Lily replied. She faced back to Thackeray. "I think we'd better start from the beginning. You came in to announce that you intend to marry. Is that right?"

Thackeray nodded. "At least, as I recall it."

"Then there was that bit about becoming half-owner of the entire world."

"Exactly."

"After that," Lily went on, "you began to question me about your intended, as if I might

be acquainted with her. Then, somehow, Marilyn's name got involved in the discussion."

"Naturally," Thackeray said.

"Thackeray, that's preposterous," Lily said. "You make it sound as if Marilyn is your intended."

"But she is!"

Marilyn leaped up. "Me?" she shrieked.

Thackeray glared in her direction. "Not you — *Marilyn*. I don't even know *you*." He peered more closely at the figure. "Who are you?"

"I'm Marilyn!"

Disgusted, Thackeray pointed toward the rear of the castle. "Marilyn is out there in the cemetery!" he insisted. "I just left her there!"

Marilyn ran to Lily. "He's trying to kill me!" she wailed.

"Now, now," Lily said, trying to calm Marilyn down. "I'm sure that's not what Thackeray meant." She smiled. "What *did* you mean, Thackeray?"

Thackeray looked baffled. "I'm not sure anymore," he said.

"Would you like to start at the beginning again?"

He shook his head. "The last time we went back to the beginning, we got more confused. All I know for certain is that tonight I asked Marilyn to become Mrs. Thackeray and she said yes."

"I did not!" Marilyn protested.

He looked at her painfully. "If you're Marilyn, why aren't you in the cemetery?"

Marilyn shrieked again and hid behind Lily's chair.

"I think it might be wise to drop that word 'cemetery' from the conversation," Lily said. "It has an upsetting effect—for some reason—on Marilyn. Not everyone has the same appreciation of you-know-whats."

"I won't mention it again," Thackeray promised. "In fact, I don't intend to say one more thing about anything. It is perfectly obvious to me what has happened. Your niece has been amusing herself at my expense. She has merely been toying with me!"

Lily turned to Marilyn. "Have you been toying with Thackeray, dear?"

Marilyn, still frightened, shook her head.

Lily faced back to Thackeray. "She denies it."

"Then explain this. Why did she lead me on? Why did she agree to meet me in the you-know-what? Why, when I proposed, did she say yes?"

Lily turned to Marilyn again. "Why did you do that, dear?"

"But I didn't!" Marilyn insisted.

"Could it have been some other Marilyn?" Lily suggested to Thackeray.

"How many other Marilyns are there at the castle?"

"That's an excellent point," Lily said thoughtfully.

Thackeray faced toward Marilyn. "I hereby withdraw my offer of marriage!" he declared. "I have my pride! There is nothing you could do or say that would get me to propose to you again!"

"Good, good," Marilyn said eagerly.

Thackeray turned and strode toward the exit.

At the door, he halted. "Unless, of course, you want to apologize," he said. "In that case, I might reconsider."

"Apologize for what? I didn't do anything."

"Is that your final answer?"

"Yes!" Marilyn replied in no uncertain terms.

"Perhaps you'd like to think it over."

Marilyn shook her head. "No."

"That, then, is your final final answer?"

"Yes."

"My patience is wearing thin," Thackeray said. "I can allow you only one more final answer. What will it be?"

"NO!"

"Is that an unqualified no, or are you hedging?"

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Thackeray winced. "You don't have to shout! I'm not deaf! And I'm not insensitive, either! I will not stand here and have my pride pricked and pummeled! I'm leaving! And you have seen the last of me!"

"Good! Good! Go!"

Thackeray hesitated. "There is one other solution," he said. "How would it be if *I* apologized to *you*?"

Exhausted, Marilyn sank into a chair.

"It doesn't seem to interest her," Lily said to Thackeray.

"Then that is the final straw!" Thackeray said. "I'm going!"

He turned, strode forward again, crashed into a wall, rebounded, plunged forward once more, and disappeared.

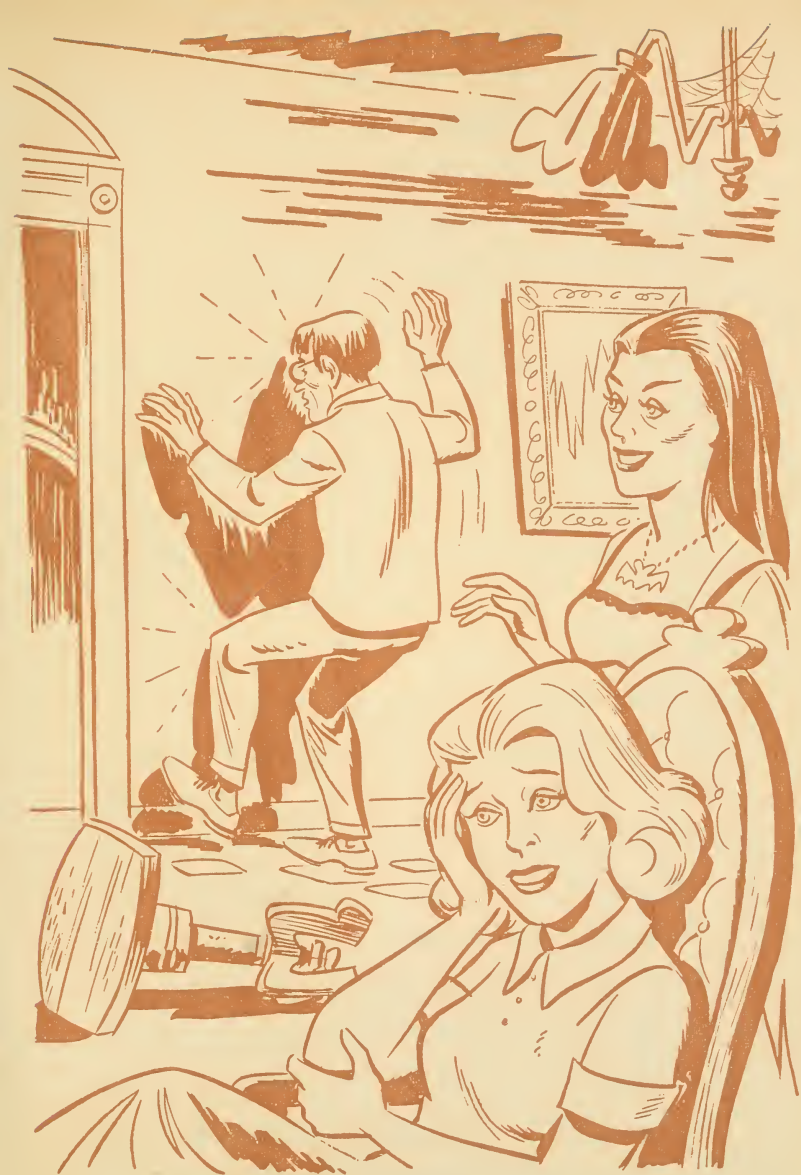
Thackeray charged down the corridor, reached the entrance to the cellar, stormed down the steps, and stalked into the laboratory, where he found Dr. Enstyne seated on a stool looking wholly defeated.

"Doctor, I apologize!" Thackeray raged. "You were right!"

Dr. Enstyne shook his head, sighing. "No, I was wrong."

"On the contrary, you were completely right!"

"You're wrong—I was wrong," Dr. Enstyne insisted. "If I was right, I wouldn't be wrong,



would I? You can't be right and wrong at the same time. Unless you're right about being wrong, that is. In which case you're still wrong, no matter how right about being wrong you are. Right?"

"What I'm trying to say is that you were right about Marilyn."

"Oh, you changed your mind about her, eh?"

"Completely."

"Now you want her turned into a water fountain, right?"

"Wrong."

"A gas pump?"

"No. I never want to see her again!"

"You're making a mistake," Dr. Enstyne said. "A gas pump named Marilyn—that'd be something to see."

"I have withdrawn my offer of marriage," Thackeray said. "I have decided to dedicate myself to the monster and conquering the world. Are you ready?"

"I'm so ready, I'm a week behind," Dr. Enstyne said. "But I'm afraid that the monster

isn't ready. The bugs are back in."

"You mean it stopped talking?"

Dr. Enstyne nodded sadly. "All it tells me is to pack up my gnishes in my old kit bag and go, go, go. And, worse yet, it tells me in my own voice."

"But that's your tape recording, Doctor."

"I know. That's what I meant when I said I was wrong. I was wrong about its talking. All it says to me is what I said to it. You can't take over the world like that. When it went on television to announce the take-over of the world, somebody would probably ask a question. And what would the monster answer? Pack up your gnishes?"

"There's only one thing to do," Thackeray said stoutly. "We'll just have to keep at it. We'll have to work and work and work until finally we get the bugs out."

"Who can work? I've got gnishes in my kitchen and Munsters in my mansion. Who can work in an atmosphere like that?"

"All right, then. As you always say, first things

first. First we'll get rid of the Munsters."

"It can't be done," Dr. Enstyne said gloomily. "If a monster can't scare them out, what can?"

"Yes . . . that is a problem," Thackeray admitted. "But there must be some solution."

"Sure there's a solution. We could move out and leave them the castle."

"I would be tempted," Thackeray said. "Except that we need our equipment, and our equipment is here." He shook his head. "No, we'll have to figure out something else." He brightened. "Perhaps we could explain the situation to them and ask them to leave," he said. "They seem like nice people—except, of course, for Marilyn."

"You can't talk to them," Dr. Enstyne said. "You open your mouth to talk to them and you get hit in the teeth with a gnish." He pulled his head in, recalling. "I tried it. And right in the teeth I got it—with a gnish!"

"You're probably right." Then, once more, Thackeray brightened. "The monster didn't frighten them," he said. "But that may have been

due to a combination of things—number one, because it couldn't talk—”

“Couldn't talk? It said, ‘Pack up your gnishes in your old kit bag.’ ”

“Yes, but that was your voice. Perhaps they recognized it. However, there's one other aspect.”

“Is that anything like a gnish?”

“I mean, there's one other reason why the monster may not have frightened them—the fact that they could see it.”

“That makes a lot of sense,” Dr. Enstyne said. “It didn't scare them because they could see it. I guess if they couldn't see it, they'd be out of here by now. Right? Oh, sure, that makes all the sense in the world. What are you trying to tell me? If I want to get rid of the Munsters, I've got to make my monster invisible? I have a better idea. Why don't I just destroy it completely? That way, nobody could see it, and, bingo, we'd have the whole world in our hip pocket. Is that what you're trying to tell me? Thackeray, I said it before, and I say it again.

You're a little cuckoo in the noodle."

"Doctor, will you let me explain? All I'm saying is that people aren't as afraid of things they can see as they are of things they *can't* see."

"I heard you. And I say it again—you're a little cuckoo in the noodle."

"Let me prove it," Thackeray said. "Are people afraid of automobiles?"

"Only the ones that go beep in the night."

"The correct answer is, no, people are not afraid of automobiles. But do you know how many people are killed in automobiles every year?"

"How many?"

"Thousands. Yet people are not afraid of automobiles." He smiled. "On the other hand, how many people are killed every year by ghosts?"

"The ones that go beep in the night?"

"Yes, that kind."

"None," Dr. Enstynne replied. "No people are killed by ghosts, because there is no such thing as a ghost. What people *think* are ghosts are just little automobiles going beep in the night."

"Exactly! Now do you see what I mean? People can see automobiles, and they're not afraid. But they *can't* see ghosts, and they *are* afraid. Does that prove my point?"

Dr. Enstyne nodded. "You have a scientific mind," he said. "You're a little cuckoo in the noodle, but, boy, have you got a scientific mind!" He frowned. "No, I don't see it. What's your point?"

"We'll frighten them out with ghosts."

"Ha!" Dr. Enstyne scoffed. "Who's afraid of ghosts!"

"Almost everybody."

"That's nonsense. Anyway, what ghosts?"

"The ghosts in the castle."

Dr. Enstyne jumped off his stool and leaped into Thackeray's lap. "There are ghosts in the castle?" he asked, quivering.

"No, no, no," Thackeray replied, easing Dr. Enstyne off his lap. "Not real ghosts. But the Munsters don't know that. If they hear sounds of ghosts, they'll think there *are* ghosts."

"If we haven't got any ghosts, how are you

going to get them to make ghost sounds? Pinch them?"

"We'll make the sounds, Doctor—you and I. We'll make creaking sounds, hooting sounds, chain-rattling sounds—all the kinds of sounds that ghosts make."

Dr. Enstyne smiled, warming to the idea. "I can also do an imitation of John Wilkes Booth," he said. "Can I throw that in just for kicks?"

"I don't think it fits the situation, Doctor."

"Why not? You don't think John Wilkes Booth is a ghost by now?"

"Doctor, I wish you'd take this a little more seriously. It's important. It's the only way I can think of to get the Munsters out of the castle."

"I'm serious," Dr. Enstyne protested. "I take it into consideration that you have a cuckoo in your noodle, so I don't pop you on the noggin, like anybody else would do if you came around saying the way to get rid of a Munster is to play John Wilkes Booth in the castle. Is that serious, or is that serious?"

"All right, if you don't like my idea, then what's your idea?"

"My idea is that I think we're stuck with *your* idea," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Then you agree?"

"Sure I agree. We're stuck! I'm the one who said it. I'd be a funny fellow if I didn't agree with what I said, wouldn't I?"

"I mean, do you agree that we'll pretend to be ghosts to chase the Munsters out of the castle?"

"That, too," Dr. Enstyne nodded.

"Fine," said Thackeray gleefully. "Now, first we'll have to find some chains. I think there are some down here in the cellar."

"First we'll have to find the cellar," Dr. Enstyne said.

"We're *in* the cellar, Doctor."

"That's no guarantee we can find it," Dr. Enstyne said. "When a fellow with eyes like mine is following a fellow with eyes like yours, sometimes you can be where you are and not even know it. How do you know we're in the cellar?"

"By the process of elimination," Thackeray replied. "I know that when I left the Great Hall, I went to the cellar to find you. And here you are. So, if I found you, and I'm with you, I must be in the cellar. Right?"

"I'm convinced," Dr. Enstyne replied. "You have a brain like a scientist. Sometimes I don't know how you do it."

"Logic, that's all." He looked around. "Have you seen the chains lately?"

"What do they look like?"

"Links, all linked together."

"How long?"

"Oh, about as long as a long piece of string."

Dr. Enstyne shook his head. "I haven't seen them."

"Well, I'll putter around. Maybe I'll come across them."

"Where are we going to do this ghosting?" Dr. Enstyne said as Thackeray began to search the laboratory.

"Ummm . . . let's see. If we really had ghosts, where would they be?"

"Down in the village, getting something to eat," Dr. Enstyne replied. "Somebody stuffed our refrigerator full of gnishes. There are enough gnishes in there to last a hundred thousand years."

"That's a long time, Doctor," Thackeray said with a smile.

"If you like gnishes like I like gnishes, one gnish would last a hundred thousand years," Dr. Enstyne explained.

"Oh. Well, getting back to ghosts, I think the towers would probably be the best place to start. We'll take the chains up to the towers and rattle them around up there. The Munsters will hear the sounds and they'll be frightened out of their wits."

"Better to be frightened out of their beds and out of the castle," Dr. Enstyne replied.

"That's what I mean."

"Then say what you—"

"Eureka!" Thackeray suddenly cried.

"What is it?"

"I found them!"

Dr. Enstyne groaned. "What do we need with a Eureka? Can you rattle a Eureka? Forget the Eureka! Stick to chains!"

In the Great Hall, Marilyn closed her book, yawned, then smiled at her aunt, who was asleep in her chair.

"Aunt Lily. . . ."

Lily started. She opened her eyes, then returned Marilyn's smile. "I was just resting my eyes," she said.

"You've been resting your eyes for over an hour," Marilyn said. "I was just thinking about going up to bed. How about you?"

Lily stretched and yawned. "Yes, I think that's a good idea. This mountain air certainly makes me feel sleepy." She rose from her chair. "Has Grandpa gone up?"

Marilyn, rising also, nodded. "Everyone—Eddie, Grandpa, Uncle Herman—they're all in bed. Asleep by now, I imagine."

"Poor Herman," Lily said as she and Marilyn walked toward the stairs. "I hope his cold doesn't

linger. I'm afraid it would spoil the vacation for him."

"Oh, he'll be fine in the morning," Marilyn said.

"Yes, I'm sure he will be. There's nothing like a hot-water bottle for a chill."

As they walked up the stairs, Marilyn said, "Are you really enjoying yourself, Aunt Lily?"

"Oh, yes, I am," Lily replied. "I made twenty-two dozen gushes today. I haven't had that much fun in a long time." She frowned. "But I wish you were having a better time," she said. "I'd hoped the lodge would be filled with guests. I thought you might find some people your own age to mix with."

Marilyn giggled. "There's Thackeray."

"He's nice, yes. But he hasn't really paid much attention to you, has he? Except, of course, for that strange scene tonight. Frankly, almost every time I've seen him he's been talking to Spot. He must love animals."

"I don't think he's exactly my type, anyway," Marilyn said.

"Whose type is he?"

"Well . . . Spot's."

"That's unkind, dear. I think Thackeray is charming. He reminds me of a young man who was courting me before I met your Uncle Herman. He had Thackeray's trouble—poor eyesight. I remember I baked a cake for him for his birthday one year, and that night he went out to get some ice cream to go with it." She shook her head sadly. "Poor boy."

"What happened?"

"I don't know," Lily replied as they reached the top of the stairs and walked on down the corridor. "That was the last I ever saw of him. He went out for ice cream and never came back." She sighed. "I sometimes have nightmares about that. I dream that he has returned with the ice cream, and there I am, married to Herman."

"That would be awkward," Marilyn agreed.

"Yes, it would. The cake was eaten years and years ago."

They reached Herman's door and stopped. "I want to look in on your uncle," Lily said.

"All right. Good night, Aunt Lily."

"Good night, dear. And take heart. Something may happen yet. Maybe it's just too early in the season for the guests to be here. They might show up all of a sudden. That would pep the place up. Parties, dances, games—wouldn't that be nice?"

Marilyn nodded, smiling. "Good night."

Lily opened the door of Herman's room and went in. She tiptoed to the bed, then stopped and listened. Herman was breathing evenly. Lily put a hand on his shoulder and shook him gently. "Herman? Are you asleep?"

Herman stirred. "Who? Huh? What?"

"It's Lily, dear. Are you asleep?"

"I'm not now," Herman said gruffly, blinking in the dimness.

"Well, then go to sleep, dear," Lily said. "You need all the rest you can get."

Herman muttered.

Lily tiptoed out of the room.

8

Moans in the Night

AS SILENCE settled over the castle in the early morning hours, Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray, loaded down with chains, made their way more or less quietly toward the towers.

"It's kind of scary up here," Dr. Enstyne said, shuddering.

"It's dark, that's all," Thackeray said. "But that's *all* it is. There is no such thing as a ghost."

"I know that. And you know that. But do the ghosts know that?"

"How could— Oh, never mind."

"You never heard a ghost say there's no such thing as a ghost, did you?" Dr. Enstyne said shakily. "I'll say you didn't. A ghost has got better sense."

"It's too ridiculous to discuss."

"I'll tell you what ghosts say. Ghosts say

there's no such thing as people. So if they're wrong about us, how do you know we're not just as wrong about them?"

"Doctor, you're dragging your chain."

"How do you know that's me? Maybe it's a ghost."

"Sh!"

They proceeded up the winding stone stairway until they reached the top floor of the castle. Thackeray halted, and Dr. Enstyne stopped, too, after he crashed into Thackeray.

"Sh! Sh! Sh!" Thackeray scolded.

"I couldn't help it. I bumped into a ghost!"

"That was me!"

"You're a ghost? You've got a lot of nerve saying there's no such thing as a ghost, when you're a ghost yourself! Why didn't you tell me? Do you think that I want a ghost working for me?"

Thackeray refused to discuss the matter. "This is where we separate," he said. "You go to the east tower and I'll go to the west tower. When you get there, moan and rattle your chain.

Over in the west tower, I'll be wailing and rattling *my* chain."

"How come you get to wail and I have to moan? I'm a better wailer than I am a moaner. I'm a whale of a wailer."

"All right, you wail and I'll moan."

"I don't like it," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Why not? This is what we agreed to do. It's the only way we could think of to get rid of the Munsters."

"You didn't say anything about this moaning and wailing. All you said was we'd rattle some chains. If I'm up in that tower wailing, and I hear somebody in another tower moaning, how am I going to know it's you? Maybe it'll be a ghost. You ever heard me wail? You know what it sounds like? It sounds like the mating call of a ghost! How do I know—"

"Doctor, it *won't* be a ghost!" Thackeray broke in. "It will be me!"

"How will I know that?"

"Well, the towers aren't very far apart. Every once in a while, stick your head out the tower

window and call over to me. Ask me if it's me."

"That's better. I like that. It's like being in the same tower."

"Exactly. All right, now. Are you ready?"

"Give me a couple days to think it over."

"No! Now, Doctor!"

"All right, all right, I'm going."

Dr. Enstyne made his way up the steps toward the west tower. And Thackeray followed right after him, thinking he was on the way to the east tower. Their chains clanked on the stone steps.

When Dr. Enstyne reached the tower, he put his head out a window and called toward the opposite tower. "Thackeray! You there?"

A few steps away, Thackeray stuck his head out of the window on the other side of the room and called back. "I'm here! Are you there?"

"The towers are closer than I thought!" Dr. Enstyne called back. "You sound like you're right here with me!"

"So do you!"

"So do I what?"

"Sound like you're right here in the tower with me."

"Look around. Maybe I'm over there!"

"You're being ridiculous again, Doctor! How could you be over here if you're over there?"

"Maybe I'm lost!"

"Rattle your chain, Doctor! And wail!"

Dr. Enstyne rattled his chain and cried, "Wail! Wail! Wail!"

"No, no, no, no, no!" Thackeray shouted. "Don't say 'wail.' Make a wailing sound. Like, *Woooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!*" "

"Yi! Don't do that! You scare me!"

"Doctor, do you want to get rid of the Munsters? If you do, then wail!"

"Woooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!" Dr. Enstyne wailed, rattling his chain at the same time.

A second later Thackeray joined him, rattling his chain, too, and moaning.

Lily was the first to appear in the corridor. She stood there, looking up toward the towers. A moment later Grandpa appeared—then Her-

man and Eddie, and, finally, Marilyn.

"Is it the wind?" Lily asked in a puzzled voice.

"It could be," Grandpa said. "Except that there's no wind blowing."

"I'll tell you what it sounds like to me," Herman said. "It sounds like a haunting!"

"It couldn't be," Grandpa said. "Who would be doing it? We're the only guests in the castle."

"I wonder . . ." Lily began, smiling.

"You mean you think there are other guests?" Herman said doubtfully.

"No, no. It just struck me that possibly . . . well, that by chance. . . . Well, what I mean is that maybe this is part of the entertainment provided by the lodge."

"Wouldn't somebody have mentioned it?" Herman said.

"But, Herman, it would be more fun this way. Isn't a haunting always more fun when it's a surprise?"

Herman smiled. "That's certainly true."

"That's what it is, all right. A surprise haunting!" Grandpa said. "Ya-hoooooooo!"

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Herman said. "Let's join in!"

"See you in the towers!" Grandpa cried. An instant later he became a bat and, wings flapping, flew off down the corridor toward the stairs that led upward.

"No one can get into costume faster than Grandpa," Herman said admiringly.

"What are you going to do, dear?" Lily said.

Herman thought a second, then smiled broadly. "I think I'll do my monster act," he said. "It's what I do best."

"You *are* wonderful at it," Lily agreed.

"And I'll do my imitations!" Eddie said.

"Which ones, dear?"

"My creaks," Eddie replied. "My door-creaks, my floor-creaks, and my stairs-creaks!"

"But one at a time," Lily warned. "When you do them all at once, dear, it sounds more like a fire siren than a creak."

"Let's go, Son," Herman said.

Herman lumbered off down the corridor, looking—without much effort—quite like a



monster. And Eddie trailed after him, creaking his door-creak, then his floor-creak, and then his stairs-creak.

"Shall we watch the fun?" Lily asked Marilyn.

"Why not?" Marilyn said, giggling.

They hurried off after Herman and Eddie.

Dr. Enstyne interrupted his wailing and put his head out the window of the tower. "Thackeray? Are you there?"

Thackeray, on the other side of the room, put his own head out a window and called back, "I'm right here!"

"You sure you're there? You sure you're not over here flying around my head and flapping your wings in my face?"

"That's a bat!" Thackeray answered. "There's a bat over here in my tower, too!"

"I don't like it," Dr. Enstyne said. "You know the old saying: 'Where there's bats, there's ghosts!'"

"I wish you hadn't said that, Doctor." Thackeray no longer sounded confident.

"I'm going to say something else. I'm not the only one over here in my tower rattling a chain."

"Wh-what exactly do you mean?" Thackeray asked, his voice quivering.

"Just what I said! When I stop rattling my chain, I can still hear a chain rattling!"

"Doctor, the same thing is happening over here in my tower. Someone else is here . . . rattling a chain!"

"And over here I've got a moaning," Dr. Enstyne said.

"And I have a wailing!"

"You know what I think? I think we've got ghosts!"

"You know what I think, Doctor?"

"You think I'm right!"

"Right!"

"You know what else I think? I think we'd better get out of here!"

"Meet you at the landing!"

Thackeray and Dr. Enstyne dropped their chains, rushed for the doorway—and met!

"Thackeray! The ghost has got me!" Dr.

Enstyne cried. "Help me!"

"I can't! My ghost has got me, too!"

"Bat him on the bean!"

"I will!"

"Ouch!" Dr. Enstyne cried.

"What happened?"

"Somebody batted me on the bean!"

"Doctor! My ghost has released me!"

"Mine, too! But the other ghosts are coming to get us!"

"How do you know?"

"Can't you hear? Hear that? Hear that creaking? That door-creaking and that floor-creaking and that stairs-creaking?"

"Yes, yes, I hear it!"

"It's getting louder! Now it sounds like one big creaking!"

"It sounds more like a fire siren to me!"

"Maybe the ghosts are playing fire department!"

"Doctor! Run!"

"I'm running, I'm running!"

Thackeray and Dr. Enstyne pounded down

the stairs, reached the top floor, then scrambled onward.

At the next landing they met Herman.

"It's the monster!" Dr. Enstyne cried. "He's playing monster!"

"Never mind!" Thackeray shrieked, hurrying on.

At the next landing they met Eddie, who, at that moment, was imitating a door-creak.

"Watch out for the ghosts!" Dr. Enstyne warned. "And while you're at it, you'd better get yourself oiled in the hinges."

"Never mind!" Thackeray shouted, plunging onward.

At the next landing they met Lily and Marilyn.

"Watch out for the ghosts!" Dr. Enstyne warned. "Go back! Go back!"

Startled, Lily and Marilyn turned to retreat.

"Scientists and scientists' assistants first!" Dr. Enstyne called back as he and Thackeray swept past.

Lily and Marilyn stopped and watched Thackeray and Dr. Enstyne run down the stairs.

"Have they changed the game? Are we playing tag now?" Lily said.

"I guess they did want us to follow them," Marilyn said. "They insisted on going first."

At that moment Eddie came along. "Is the haunting over?" he asked, disappointed.

"Something must have spoiled it," Lily said. "I hope it wasn't a certain little boy who got carried away again and sounded more like a fire siren than a floor-, door- and stairs-creak."

Eddie looked sheepish.

Then Herman came along. "That certainly was a short haunting," he said. "Where did everybody go?"

Lily shrugged. "I haven't the faintest idea."

Grandpa suddenly appeared. He swooped down from the ceiling and, landing, turned back into Grandpa. "What's the name of the game around here?" he complained. "I was just getting started."

"It's been changed, that's obvious," Lily said. "But I don't know—" She suddenly smiled. "But of course! I should have guessed. Dr. Enstyne

and Thackeray rushed by here," she said to the others, "and called back to us to follow them. Doesn't that suggest something?"

"Hide-and-seek!" Herman beamed.

"Of course!"

"Isn't that a little childish?" Grandpa complained.

"Yes, it is," Lily agreed. "But it's their castle. We're guests. So I think we ought to play along. After all, they're doing this for us—to entertain us."

"Oh, all right," Grandpa grouched. "But let's get this over with. If we're not going to have a haunting, I'd rather be back in bed." Once more he turned himself into a bat. "I'll fly ahead and find them," he said. "Then I'll come back and tell you where they are, and we can pretend to be looking for them and come upon them accidentally."

"I don't think that's cricket, Grandpa," Herman said.

"We can call it cricket. We're playing it with a bat, aren't we?"

Grandpa didn't wait for a reply. He flapped off down the stairs.

Thackeray and Dr. Enstyne reached the main floor of the castle, ran to the entrance to the cellar, continued downward, and a moment later rushed into the laboratory.

"The monster! Get behind the monster!" Thackeray said.

"It's not here!" Dr. Enstyne replied. "We saw it on the stairs!"

"No, here it is!"

Dr. Enstyne, puzzled, peered at the monster. "Boy! you're a speedy monster," he said, impressed. "A second ago you were up there, and now you're down here. You must have passed yourself coming back!"

Thackeray was already huddled behind the monster. "Don't talk! Hide!" he said to Dr. Enstyne. "Those ghosts are probably after us!"

"What good is hiding behind a monster?"

"It might frighten them away. After all, they were only human . . . once."

"For a scientist's assistant, you have a good bean on your shoulders," Dr. Enstyne said, joining Thackeray behind the monster.

"Shhhh! Quiet!"

"I didn't say anything. That was you. You said, 'Shhhh! Quiet!' "

"Then, shhhhh! Do you want the ghosts to find us!"

"It might be a good test," Dr. Enstyne said. "We could find out if a monster can scare a ghost. If it can, we have the world in our pocket. A monster that can scare ghosts—think what it could do to people!"

Thackeray thought for a second, then said, "That's a good point, Doctor. We could consider it an experiment."

"But suppose it *doesn't* scare the ghosts?"

"That wouldn't prove anything. It still might frighten people."

"But suppose the story gets out? Suppose the people hear that the monster can't frighten ghosts? You know what would happen? When we sent the monster out to conquer the world,

the people would get together all the ghosts they could find and sic 'em on the monster. It'd be the monster versus the ghosts!"

"Preposterous!"

"Sure. But it'd make a good movie, wouldn't it?"

"Sh!"

"I'd go to see a movie like that myself. The Monster Versus the Ghost!" He shuddered. "Yi! It's scary!"

"Doctor—sh!"

"It'd be a great picture. We'd make it an extravaganza! Maybe we could get the ghost of John Barrymore to play the ghost." He frowned. "Who could we get to play the monster? We can't use our monster. It can't talk. Hardly anybody goes to silent pictures anymore."

"Doctor! Quiet! I hear something!"

"That's me. I'm telling you about the movie."

"No, it's something else! An eerie sound!"

"It's an eerie movie."

"No, it's—look!"

Dr. Enstyne peered into the dimness. "Hey,

boy! That's the biggest fly I ever saw!"

"It's the bat!"

"I wonder if it's got any movie experience?" Dr. Enstyne said. "We're going to need some extras."

Thackeray sighed, relieved. "There it goes, flying away."

"Now we're in trouble," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Why do you say that?"

"That bat was probably a scout for the ghosts," Dr. Enstyne said. "Right now it's probably blabbing where we're hiding."

"Ridiculous."

"Why so? That looked like a bigmouthed bat to me. You think a bat like that can keep a secret?"

"They're in the cellar," Grandpa reported, landing and becoming Grandpa once more.

"Where in the cellar, Grandpa?" Lily asked.

"In the laboratory, hiding behind Herman," Grandpa replied.

"Then let's get down there," Herman said.

"We don't want to keep them waiting too long. After all, they're doing this for us—to entertain us."

"Yes," Lily agreed. "I think we ought to—" She interrupted herself. "Hiding behind who, Grandpa?" she said.

"Hiding behind Herman."

"Behind me?" Herman said. He turned and looked behind himself.

"I know it doesn't make sense," Grandpa said. "But, nevertheless, that's where they are—in the cellar, in the laboratory, hiding behind Herman."

"This I want to see," Lily said.

"I'm not sure whether I want to see it or not," Herman said uncomfortably. "It sounds a little weird to me."

"Maybe Grandpa was seeing things," Marilyn suggested.

"I *was* seeing things," Grandpa said. "I was seeing Dr. Enstyne, Thackeray, and Herman."

"I mean, maybe you weren't yourself."

"Of course I wasn't myself—I was a bat! But that doesn't mean I didn't see Herman down

there in the cellar. In fact, it's proof positive that I *did*! As a bat, I have better eyes than I do as a . . . as a whatever-I-am."

"Well, there's one way to find out," Lily said. "Come on, all of you. On to the cellar!"

With Grandpa leading the way, they marched down the stairs, reached the main floor, then trooped down the corridor to the cellar entrance.

In the laboratory, Thackeray touched a finger to his lips. "Sh! Hear that?"

"Footsteps on the stairs!"

"They're coming!"

"I didn't know ghosts had footsteps. Whoever heard of a ghost with shoes?"

"You hear them, don't you? That proves they wear shoes!"

"Ah, I said it once and I'll say it again! You've got a scientific brain, Thackeray."

"Doctor, we can't just hide here! This way, we're sitting ducks!"

"Speak for yourself," Dr. Enstyne said. "Me, I'm a sitting doctor. Maybe as a doctor I'm a quack. But that doesn't make me a duck."

"What I mean is that our only chance is to fight!"

"I have a better idea—let's run again."

"It's too late," Thackeray said. "There's only one way out, and the ghosts are blocking that way already. No, we'll have to fight—you and I and the monster."

"What do we want to fight with ourselves for?" Dr. Enstyne asked. "Better, if we must fight, to fight with the ghosts."

"That's what I mean. The instant they come in that door, we'll attack! The monster can stand here, and I'll get over there, and you can get over there."

"You put me and you in the same place."

"No, I was pointing," Thackeray explained. "You get over there on that side of the doorway, and I'll get over there on the other side of the doorway. That way, counting the monster, we'll get them from three directions."

"Boy! You *have* got a scientific brain! The way you counted that up—one, two, three!"

"Activate the monster, Doctor."

Dr. Enstyne reached up and turned on the monster's switch. "Sic 'em!" he said.

"Now, Doctor, you get over there!"

"Where is there? Give me a hint."

"I'll point you," Thackeray said. He put his hands on Dr. Enstyne's shoulders and gave him a start in what happened to be the direction of the doorway. "How are you doing?"

"I don't know. How *am* I doing?"

"I'm not sure. You passed out of my range of vision."

"I must be all right," Dr. Enstyne reported. "I'm still go— Oops! I stopped!"

"Then you're there," Thackeray said. "Just wait, now, until you hear the signal. Then attack!"

"Where are you?"

"I'm on the other side of the doorway."

"I have one more question. What's—"

"Quiet! They're coming!"

"But I must know—"

"Not now!"

The laboratory door opened. Unfortunately

this left Dr. Enstyne behind the door, where he could not be seen. Not that it was any handicap to Thackeray, who couldn't have seen him anyway. But it did, for the moment, hide him from the view of the Munsters.

Grandpa was the first to enter the laboratory. As he did, he spotted the monster. "There! There's Herman!"

The monster, seeing Grandpa, who had fed it aspirin, cringed.

Lily entered next. "Herman!" she gasped, seeing the monster.

And the monster, seeing Lily, who had stuffed it with gnishes, did the wisest thing it could think of. It fell to the floor, crawled under a table, and crouched there, rattling.

Herman, Eddie, and Marilyn entered the laboratory next, one after the other. And Thackeray, seeing the blur of movement, deduced that the ghosts had arrived.

"Now!" Thackeray cried.

"Now when?" Dr. Enstyne replied from behind the door. "You didn't tell me what the signal

is! I tried to ask you, but—”

“That’s it! That’s the signal! Now!”

In response, Dr. Enstyne threw a stiff right cross at the door. Luckily he missed.

Perplexed by Dr. Enstyne’s and Thackeray’s actions, the Munsters gathered in the center of the room to watch.

They saw Thackeray reach out, snatch up a test tube, and hurl it toward the door. The test tube hit the door and splattered.

“I got one!” Thackeray shouted triumphantly.

Dr. Enstyne threw a kick, and this time he succeeded in hitting the door.

“Ow! Ow-yow-yow!” Dr. Enstyne cried, clutching his toe and hopping around on one foot. “I got six!”

“Six?” Thackeray replied, impressed. “Six ghosts?”

“No! One ghost and five toes! Ow! Ow-yow-yow!”

Lily turned to Herman. “I don’t think this is hide-and-seek,” she said. “It’s a game, but it’s not hide-and-seek.”

"Dr. Enstyne mentioned ghosts," Herman replied. "Maybe it's half a haunting and half hide-and-seek."

Grandpa pointed back over his shoulder. "There's the hide-and-seek half," he said, indicating the monster. "Herman is hiding under the table."

"Grandpa, that's not me!" Herman protested.

"I say it's you," Grandpa replied. "Look for yourself."

At that moment Thackeray hurled a glass beaker at the door. It, too, hit and shattered.

"Three down!" Thackeray shouted.

"Here goes number four!" Dr. Enstyne cried. Once more he kicked.

This time, however, he missed the door and everything else. He had kicked with such force, though, that the momentum carried him on. He staggered about the room, trying to regain his balance, leaving havoc in his wake. A table went down, and with it all the equipment it had contained. A temporary construction of shelves fell, and books and scientific papers began to

rain on the laboratory like confetti. Another table collapsed; more equipment, test tubes, and beakers crashed to the floor. Then another table fell, burying the monster under a load of splintered lumber.

Finally Dr. Enstyne, having made a full circle of the laboratory, collided with Thackeray. The two grasped each other in panic.

"I've got one!" Dr. Enstyne cried.

"I have one, too!" Thackeray shouted.

Fiercely they wrestled each other about the laboratory.

"I've got a tough one!" Dr. Enstyne panted.

"No tougher than mine!"

"Help! Mine is winning!" Dr. Enstyne screeched.

"Be with you in a second, Doctor! I'm beating mine!"

Dr. Enstyne slipped to the floor.

Thackeray fell on top of him.

"Say 'uncle'!" Thackeray commanded victoriously.

"Which uncle? I have four uncles."

Thackeray loosened his hold on Dr. Enstyne. "Doctor? Is that you?"

"It's not my uncle!"

Thackeray pulled back. "I'm sorry, Doctor. I thought—" He got to his feet. "I thought you were one of the ghosts."

"We must have chased all of them off," Dr. Enstyne said, rising. He cackled. "That's pretty good for two scientists. We handled a whole castleful of ghosts. Maybe we're in the wrong business. We ought to be ghost chasers." Elated, he executed a sudden karate chop on an imaginary ghost. "Ha! You ghost! Take that! Fool around with a scientist, will you?"

From the center of the room, Lily spoke up. "Is the game over?"

Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray stiffened, startled.

"The ghosts are back!" Dr. Enstyne cried.

"Are we the ghosts?" Lily asked. "I'm sorry, Doctor. We haven't been playing our parts. But we didn't know the rules of the game."

Dr. Enstyne squinted at her. "What kind of ghost are you? You're talking words. Ghosts are

supposed to go 'Boo!' and that's all. Ghosts have a very limited vocabulary."

"Doctor," Thackeray said patiently, "the ghosts are gone. This is Mrs. Munster. I recognize her voice."

Dr. Enstyne smiled cordially in Lily's general direction. "Lucky for you you're not a ghost," he said. He executed another brutal karate chop. "Whop! That's what a ghost gets around here!"

9

Dr. Enstyne's Dream

THE REALIZATION by Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray that the Munsters had gathered in the laboratory was followed by a period of confusing discussion. Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray insisted that they had been attacked by ghosts. The Munsters insisted just as strongly that Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray had been attacked by each other.

"I never heard anything so preposterous!" Dr. Enstyne said. "Why would Thackeray attack me? We're fellow scientists! Without me, he'd lose his chance to own half the world."

"And the same goes for Dr. Enstyne," Thackeray said. "Without me, he'd lose *his* chance to own half the world. We're a team!"

"I don't know about that," Dr. Enstyne said. "Who needs you?"

"You do, that's who!"

"You'd better watch it, you scientist! I'll give you a karate chop that'll make your neck ache for a week!"

"You and who else?"

"Me and my monster, that's who!"

"*Your* monster! It's as much *my* monster as it is *your* monster!"

"Who got the idea?" Dr. Enstyne shouted.

"Who designed it?"

"Who put the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder?" Dr. Enstyne shot back.

Thackeray fell silent for a second. Then, puzzled, he said, "I don't get the connection."

"You're going to get it if you don't stop claiming my monster," Dr. Enstyne warned.

"Boys, boys, boys," Lily broke in soothingly. "You're acting like children. Now, I'm sure this can be settled peacefully."

"Yes—what monster?" Herman said.

Dr. Enstyne pointed to Herman. "You. That's what monster."

Herman smiled. "Munster," he corrected.

"Doctor!" Thackeray said, excited. "Our monster is talking!"

Dr. Enstyne beamed. "Ha!" he said to Herman. "You have the bugs out again, eh? That's a good monster. Now, keep the bugs out! What good is a monster with the bugs in?"

Grandpa spoke up. "Is anybody interested in what I think?"

"What, Grandpa?" Lily asked.

He indicated Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray. "I think they think that our Herman is that other Herman."

"Oh! I forgot all about that other Herman," Lily said. She turned to Dr. Enstyne. "Is *that* what you think?"

Dr. Enstyne looked baffled. "I don't understand the question," he said. "Try me on who put the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder."

"I don't think he knows there are two Hermans," Grandpa said.

"There aren't!" Herman said. "There is only *one* Herman. That other one is an impostor!"

Grandpa smiled. "How do we know that?"

Maybe *you're* the impostor."

"Will the real Herman please stand up," Eddie said.

"I'm already standing up!" Herman said crossly.

"That must prove something," Lily said.

"It doesn't prove a thing," Grandpa replied. "The other Herman *can't* stand up. Not with that table on top of him."

Herman reached down, picked up the table-top, and tossed it aside. "Stand up and tell us who you are," he said to the monster. "And if you say you're me, I'll give you a karate chop that'll make your neck ache for a week!"

Slowly, fearfully, the monster got to its feet. Slowly, hesitantly, it opened its mouth. Then, trembling, it spoke.

"P-p-pack up your gn-gn-gnishes in your old k-k-kit bag, and g-g-go, g-g-go, g-g-go!"

"The bugs are back in," Dr. Enstyre said sadly.

"Does anybody want to know what I think?" Grandpa said.

"What, Grandpa?"

"I think Dr. Enstyne has built himself a Herman without knowing it."

"Who built a Herman?" Dr. Enstyne protested. "I wouldn't even know where to start. What's a Herman?"

"*That's* a Herman," Grandpa said, pointing to the monster.

Dr. Enstyne peered in the direction Grandpa indicated.

"That's a monster!" he shot back.

"Munster," Herman corrected.

"Somebody here has a southern accent," Dr. Enstyne said.

"No, it's all very simple," Lily said. "Doctor, you built a monster which looks like a Herman. But our Herman isn't a monster, he's a Munster."

"I think that explains it," Thackeray said.

"What do you know about it?" Dr. Enstyne grumbled. "You don't even know who put the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder!"

"Maybe not. But I *do* understand what's going on here. There are two monsters, and one of

them is named Herman."

"Not exactly," Lily said. "Actually, there is one monster and one Munster. The Munster is named Herman, and the monster is named—Uh, what is the monster named?"

"The monster is named monster," Dr. Enstyne replied. "We don't get fancy around here. A monster is a monster. You give a monster a name, and it starts putting on airs. All of a sudden it wants to go to college. You get a college-educated monster, and it thinks it knows more than you do. It starts fiddling around in the laboratory. *Poof!* All of a sudden it's making people. You get monsters making people, and something is cock-eyed with the world. That's why we didn't give it a name."

"Sound reasoning," Grandpa said, nodding in agreement.

"Dr. Enstyne," Herman said, "if I'm not being too curious, why did you build a monster?"

"You're being too curious," Dr. Enstyne replied. "If I told you we built him to take over the world, you'd probably run out of here and

spread the word to every middlesex, village, and farm and spoil the whole thing!"

Lily was shocked. "Is *that* why you built the monster?"

Dr. Enstyne looked at her blankly. "Why is that?"

"To take over the world?"

"Who told you? Some cuckoo chasing around to every middlesex, village, and farm and blabbing, I'll bet!"

"That's terrible!" Lily said.

"You bet it is! Why can't those cuckoos keep their mouths shut!"

"I don't see what's so terrible about it," Thackeray said. "We have as much right to the world as anyone else."

"Well, yes, to your share of it," Herman said. "But not to *all* of it."

"That's our share—all of it," Thackeray replied. "At least, it will be when we get the monster functioning correctly."

"Yes, it has bugs in it," Dr. Enstyne said. "But not for long."

"Does anyone want to know what I think?" Grandpa asked.

"What, Grandpa?"

"I think you're getting riled up for no reason," Grandpa replied. "They can't take over the world with only one monster. And especially not with this monster. It stutters."

"That's better than not saying anything," Dr. Enstyne said.

"But not good enough."

"The monster *will* be good enough when we get the bugs out," Thackeray said. "And it will be joined by other monsters—thousands of monsters. We plan to mass-produce this model."

"Does anyone want to know what I think?"

"What, Grandpa?"

"I think the world is in trouble," Grandpa said gloomily.

"I think we'd better get the plan for this monster and destroy it," Herman said.

"You can't do that," Dr. Enstyne said with a smile. "I committed it to memory. Then I swallowed it."

Lily made a face. "Raw?"

"No, with a little salt and pepper and a little tomato sauce. It wasn't bad. I'll tell you this, it was a lot better than a lot of gnishes a lot of people make and stuff in a lot of people's refrigerators!"

"Dr. Enstyne," Lily said, "why do you want to do this? Why do you want to take over the world?"

Dr. Enstyne looked thoughtful. "Well, we have a monster," he said. "And when you have a monster, what else can you do?"

"He's got a point there," Grandpa commented.

"I'll tell you the truth," Dr. Enstyne said. "Taking over the world is not the best idea in the world. It'll mean a lot of headaches. But when you have a monster. . . ."

"We tried to think of something else to do," Thackeray said. "We considered opening up a mechanical car wash and staffing it with monsters. But with all that water, the monsters would soon get rusty."

"That's life," Dr. Enstyne sighed. "When you have a monster, you've got to take over the world. You have no choice."

"Doctor, if we could think of something—something useful—would you change your mind?" Lily asked.

"Why not?" Dr. Enstyne replied. "But it's not me you need to change. It's the way things work you need to change. When you have a monster, you have to conquer the world. That's the way things work."

Lily turned to Herman. "I think this calls for a family conference," she said. "It's our duty to think up some useful use for the doctor's monsters."

"I protest," Grandpa protested. "I came here for a vacation, not to think."

"Grandpa! That's it!" Herman said.

"What did I do?" Grandpa asked.

"You just figured out a useful use for the monster," Herman said. "This is a vacation lodge, isn't it? Right! And it needs—"

"Wrong," Dr. Enstyne broke in.

"I haven't told you Grandpa's idea yet," Herman said.

"Right—and already you're wrong. This isn't a vacation lodge. It's my castle. Dr. Enstyne's castle, that's what it is. Or, if you must be formal about it, Dr. Frank Enstyne's castle. But either way you cut it, it's still a castle."

"This isn't Hodgepodge Lodge?" Lily asked, dismayed.

"Don't you hear well, lady? I just told you it's a castle. A hodgepodge, maybe. But a lodge, no."

"We must have taken the wrong turn in the storm," Herman said.

"Well, if this isn't Hodgepodge Lodge, I guess that knocks the pins out from under my idea about the monster—whatever it was," Grandpa said.

"No, it doesn't," Herman replied.

"Good," Grandpa said, smiling. "I hate to see a good idea like that—whatever it was—snuffed out so quickly." He frowned at Herman. "What is my idea?"

"Well," Herman said, "you were thinking that

what the lodge needed was a staff. So you were going to suggest that the doctor and Thackeray make a servant—a sort of butler—out of the monster.”

“Some butler!” Grandpa said. “The monster can’t talk.”

“All the better,” Herman said. “He’d be a silent butler. No back talk.”

“Herman, that’s a marvelous idea!” Lily said.

“Why are you telling *him* that?” Grandpa protested. “Tell me! It was *my* idea.”

“It’s a cuckoo idea,” Dr. Enstynne said. “Who needs a butler? When I take over the entire world, all the regular butlers will come with it. I’m going to be up to my ears in butlers!”

“Not *silent* butlers,” Lily pointed out. “That’s the advantage. Why, Doctor, do you know what would happen if you took over the world and, with it, acquired the responsibility for all those talking butlers? You’d be swamped with requests for all sorts of things. They’d all want a raise in pay. That always happens when a new management takes over.”

"Could you afford it, Doctor?" Herman asked.

Dr. Enstyne shook his head. "Being a mad scientist doesn't pay so well," he said. "If you're a regular, everyday, common, ordinary scientist, you can get a good-paying job with someone. But a mad scientist they won't take. It's discrimination. If Dr. Jekyll were alive today, he'd be on the breadline." He glanced toward his monster. "All my spare cash is tied up in parts," he said.

"Then you agree that turning the monster into a silent butler is a good idea, right?" Herman said.

Dr. Enstyne sighed sadly. "I have to agree. But it breaks my heart. I had a dream. A thousand monsters rolling off the assembly line, clomping off and conquering the world. Maybe it wasn't such a nice dream—the way some people would look at it—but it was *my* dream."

"Mine, too," Thackeray said.

Dr. Enstyne turned on him. "Get your own dream. That was *my* dream, and I don't want any scientist's assistant paddling his canoe in it."

"It's a big enough dream. I thought maybe we could share it," Thackeray said.

Dr. Enstyne shrugged. "Okay. You are welcome. But you've got to leave your canoe outside."

"Doctor, may I make a suggestion?" Lily said.

"Why not? You've already ruined my dream. What harm could a little suggestion do?"

"I think you can still have your dream—at least, part of it," Lily said. "What I mean is, I think it would still be a good idea to turn out those thousand monsters. And then, of course, turn them into butlers."

"Turn them out, turn them in—which is it?"

"Both. Because if you do what I think you *should* do, you'll need a thousand silent butlers."

"Lily," Herman said, "I think I'm thinking the same thing."

"So am I—whatever it is," Grandpa said.

"What, for heaven's sake?" Marilyn asked.

"Well, dear," Lily replied, "remember how delighted we were when we reached the castle, thinking it was Hodgepodge Lodge?"

"Yes," Marilyn said, nodding.

"We thought it was perfect—the perfect vacation spot," Lily said. "The rain was pouring down, the lightning was crashing, and it was so dark we couldn't see a foot in front of our faces."

"You should have lifted your foot up a little bit. Maybe you could have seen it then," Dr. Enstyne suggested.

"It was so exciting!" Lily said, recalling.

"Yes, but you can't count on that," Dr. Enstyne said. "About once a month the sun comes out. It ruins the whole day."

"That's likely to happen anywhere," Grandpa said.

"Imagine the number of people who are looking for a place like this," Lily went on. "There must be hundreds."

"Thousands," Herman said.

"Do you see what we're getting at?" Lily asked Dr. Enstyne.

"Sure. You're telling me the world is full of nuts. That's no news."

"No, no! We're telling you that you ought to



turn the castle into a lodge—a vacation resort!”

“All those nuts! Who’d take care of them?”

“Your thousand silent butlers, Doctor!”

Dr. Enstyne brightened. “Hey! I think you’ve got an idea there!”

“Just one of my many great ideas,” Grandpa said.

“One thing,” Dr. Enstyne said. “Where am I going to find all these nuts to come and vacation at my lodge? Nuts like that don’t grow on trees, you know. In fact, no kind of nuts grows on trees. You have to dig them up.”

“Dig them up!” Lily said, inspired. She turned to Herman. “Does that suggest something to you?”

“Of course. Our friends!”

“Yes. We’ll telephone all our friends and tell them what a wonderful place we’ve found.”

“The Harry Ghouls will come for sure,” Herman said. “Harry and Lucretia always go where the ‘in’ crowd goes.”

“And Van Pyre,” Lily suggested. “I know he’ll want to come. The weather will do wonders for

him. Perhaps it will cure his ailment."

"What ailment is that?" Thackeray asked.

"He has tired blood," Lily replied. She turned back to Herman. "Let's go up to the Great Hall and make a list. Then we'll get on the telephone."

"I'll come, too," Grandpa said. "I could add a few names to the list."

"Let's all go," Lily said. "Every little name helps."

The Munsters hurried out of the laboratory, leaving Dr. Enstyne and Thackeray alone.

"Well, I guess we'd better get busy," Dr. Enstyne said happily. "We've got a thousand monsters to make."

"Silent butlers, Doctor."

"They'll always be monsters to me. But whatever they are, we have to get busy making them. Hup! Two! Three! Four!"

Dr. Enstyne marched off, reached one of the tables that had collapsed, and began setting it up so that he could begin making monsters once more.

Thackeray started to follow him. But at that

moment the laboratory door opened and Spot came strolling in.

Thackeray lowered his eyes, looking sheepish. "You came back, I see," he said.

"Rorrrph."

"I don't blame you for being angry," Thackeray said. "I made a fool of myself, being so hasty. It wasn't like me. Usually I'm very easy to get along with. I never lose my temper. I just wasn't myself when I said all those things." He frowned thoughtfully. "Perhaps it was because I thought I was going to become half-owner of the entire world," he said. "A thing like that can change a man." His smile returned. "But now I'm back to normal again. And with excellent prospects, too. Being half-owner of a vacation resort is probably a lot better for me—a man of my temperament—than being half-owner of the entire world. Quality is better than quantity. Don't you agree?"

"Rumph," Spot muttered, curling up on the floor.

"In fact, I would guess that I would be more

attractive to you this way," Thackeray said. "As half-owner of the world, I would always be gadding about, settling this problem here, that problem there. But as half-owner of a vacation resort, I'll stay put. A girl likes to know where her fellow is during the day."

"Rrrrgmth," Spot yawned.

Thackeray grinned. "Does your agreement with my theory mean that I have your permission to court you again? I certainly hope so. I feel that, with a little time, I will be able to persuade you to become co-owner of my half-ownership of the resort. I suppose you can guess what I mean by that."

Spot snored.

"No, but you're warm."

Once more Spot snored.

"No, but you're getting warmer. That was very close."

"Snawwwwwrrrrr!"

"No, I won't tell. You'll have to guess. But right now I think I had better help Dr. Enstyne. Shall we discuss this later? Tomorrow, say—in

the cemetery? I'll meet you there."

"Snawwwrrrrruppprrrrwph!"

"Very well, if you prefer—in the East Tower." Thackeray touched his fingers daintily to his lips. "Till we meet again." Then he turned and strode toward the table that Dr. Enstyne had righted, whistling "Happy Days Are Here Again!"

"Don't whistle in the laboratory. It's bad luck," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Sorry."

"Did I hear you talking to somebody?" Dr. Enstyne said. "Who was it?"

"The future Mrs. Thackeray, that's all," Thackeray said smugly.

Dr. Enstyne looked at him, shocked. "You getting a new Mamma, boy? What about the old Mamma? What are you going to do, trade her in?" He shook his head. "That's not a good boy. You know what that is? That's a Mamma-trader-inner! There's nothing worse!"

Thackeray sighed. He saw no point in trying to explain. "Monsters, Doctor," he said. "We have monsters to make. Shall we?"

10

"Love Is Blind"

HERMAN STOOD at the window in his room, looking out at the pouring rain, while behind him Lily was busy packing his suitcase.

"It's a shame we have to leave now," Herman said. "The weather is just getting bad."

"Yes, it is," Lily agreed. "But our two weeks are over." She paused, smiling. "Besides, it will be nice to get home."

"I don't see what difference it will make," Herman said. "You've been doing the same thing here that you would have been doing at home. The last few days, for instance. Teaching the monsters—"

"Butlers, dear," Lily corrected.

"Yes, the butlers—teaching them to cook."

"But I enjoyed that. They were such good

students. They were so silent!"

Herman leaned closer to the window, looking out and down. "They're serving lunch on the terrace," he said. "I see Grandpa down there. And the Ghouls. And there's Van Pyre. In fact, all our friends seem to be down there." He frowned. "The mon—that is, the butlers are serving soup. Should they be doing that? In the rain?"

"Why not? Soup in the rain is perfect. You get such a larger portion that way. Or so it seems." She closed the suitcase. "All packed. Shall we go, dear?"

Herman turned away from the window reluctantly, went to the bed and picked up the suitcase, then led the way from the room.

"Grandpa is on the terrace," Herman said as they walked down the stairs, "but where are the others?"

"In the Great Hall, I hope. That's where I told them we'd meet them."

As they reached the bottom of the stairs, they saw guests coming and going along the corridor.

The guests waved or spoke to them.

"It certainly is a change, isn't it?" Lily smiled. "Remember the night we arrived? The castle was completely deserted."

"Frankly, Lily, I liked it that way."

"Well, yes, I did, too. All these guests sort of spoil it as a vacation retreat. But it's nice for the doctor and Thackeray. And for the world."

"Dr. Enstyne tells me all the rooms are filled," Herman said. "He even set up some cots in the towers."

"Yes, this is definitely the season's 'in' spot for the 'out' people."

They entered the Great Hall. Marilyn and Eddie were waiting. They were in conversation with Dr. Enstyne.

"Aha! Some new guests!" Dr. Enstyne said, seeing them approach. "Sorry, but I have no room. Maybe I could fix you up some space in the stable."

"It's us, Doctor," Lily said. "Herman and Lily."

"Oh. I thought you looked like somebody I

know." He reached out and took Lily's hand and shook it. "Herman, you don't know how sorry I am to see you leave. I'd be sorrier, only I can use your rooms."

"I'm Lily," Lily said.

"How do you do? I'm Dr. Enstyne."

"Yes, I know."

Dr. Enstyne turned to Marilyn and grasped her hand. "Herman, I apologize. I thought you were Lily," he said.

"That's all right. You're forgiven," Marilyn said, smiling.

"You'd better do something for that cold, Herman," Dr. Enstyne said. "It's making your voice sound like a girl's."

"I will," Marilyn said. "The minute I get home, I'll take a cold shower!"

"Good fellow!"

"Are you sure you can handle things now?" Lily said to Dr. Enstyne.

"Sure. With all these silent butlers to do the work, how can I miss? The only thing that could go wrong is for the weather to turn good. But

I have a plan for that. I have a plan that's going to make it rain, thunder, and lightning every day, all day."

"That sounds marvelous!" Lily said enthusiastically.

"It sounds impossible to me," Herman said. "What's your plan, Doctor?"

"Well, I've done some experiments," Dr. Enstyne said, "and I found out that the meteorologists are all wrong about what makes it rain. You know what the meteorologists think? You listen to a meteorologist, and he'll tell you that what makes it rain is a lot of dust particles floating up into the sky and getting in the clouds. And these dust particles go rubbing around in the water vapor. And they go collecting more water vapor and more water vapor until they get so heavy with water vapor that they fall down out of the sky as raindrops. That's a pretty crazy theory, isn't it?"

"Well. . . ."

"It sounds crazy to me," Dr. Enstyne insisted. "So I did some experimenting. You know what I

found out? You know what it is that really makes rain? It's the clouds crying."

"Crying?" Lily said doubtfully.

"Right. Weeping. The clouds. Crying."

"I see. And what's your plan?"

"I'm going to get myself an airplane," Dr. Enstyne said, "and I'm going to fly up there to where the clouds are, and I'm going to tell them a bunch of sad stories."

"And they'll cry?"

"Right. Every day, they'll cry. I have enough sad stories to last a thousand years."

Herman looked at his watch. "I think we'd better get going," he said. "It's a long drive."

"I'll call you a monster," Dr. Enstyne said.

"Munster," Herman corrected.

"He means a monster, dear—a butler," Lily explained.

"Yes, a butler to carry your bags," Dr. Enstyne said. He clapped his hands, and a monster came running up. "Take the Munsters' bags out to the car," Dr. Enstyne commanded. "And no back talk!"

The butler picked up the suitcases and departed, running.

"If I was paying him anything, I'd cut his wages," Dr. Enstyne said. "What could he say?"

The Munsters, accompanied by Dr. Enstyne, left the Great Hall, walked down the corridor, and stepped out into the storm. Grandpa came over from the terrace.

"Beautiful day for the trip," Grandpa said.

"It won't last," Dr. Enstyne said. "When you get down to the bottom of the mountain, you'll find a lot of sunshine all over the place. Down there, they haven't got the sad clouds we have up here. Down there, they have nothing but happy clouds."

They walked on to the car. The butler was just putting the bags into the trunk.

"Will we see you next year?" Dr. Enstyne asked. "If you're thinking about coming back, you'd better make a reservation now."

"We'll let you know," Lily said, getting into the car.

"Don't bother," Dr. Enstyne said. "For friends

like you, there's always room. I can throw down some more straw on the floor of the stable."

The Munsters all said good-bye—several times—to Dr. Enstyne. Then they drove off, heading down the mountain. Lightning crackled overhead. Rain washed down the windows.

"Ah, me," Herman sighed. "I'm sorry to leave."

"It *was* a nice vacation—just like home," Lily said with a smile.

"And we saved the world from being conquered by monsters," Grandpa said. "That's something, too."

"Marilyn, did you enjoy yourself?" Herman asked.

"Well, it was different, Uncle Herman."

"Fine. How about you, Eddie?"

"It was great," Eddie said. "That rock-dodging game was more fun than anything. I wish we had one at home."

"We have some boulders in the backyard," Herman said. "I could get up on the roof and throw them down at you."

"Gee! Would you?"

"I promise."

"You're a wonderful father, Herman," Lily said.

"How about you, Spot? Did you have a good time?" Herman asked.

Silence.

Herman looked around. "Spot?"

Still silence.

Herman slammed on the brakes. "We forgot Spot!" he cried. "We'll have to go back."

"I didn't forget him," Eddie said. "He decided to stay for a while."

They all looked at him, puzzled.

"Stay?" Herman said. "Why?"

"He's engaged," Eddie replied.

"Engaged?"

"Engaged to Thackeray," Eddie said. He grinned. "But don't worry," he said. "He's coming home right after the wedding. He just wants to stay for the cake."

Herman started the car moving again. "I'd sure like to see that wedding," he said. "I'd like

to see Thackeray find a finger to put the ring on.”

“Don’t you think we ought to tell Thackeray that Spot isn’t . . . uh, human?” Grandpa asked.

“It wouldn’t make any difference,” Lily said. “That didn’t stop me when you told me that about Herman, did it?”

“No,” Grandpa replied.

“Love is blind,” Lily smiled. “And a good thing, too.”



